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THE

WORKS

OF

HANNAH MORE.

A NEW EDITION,

WITH ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS,

IN ELEVEN VOLUMES.

VOL. IV.

STORIES AND TALES.—MORAL SKETCHES.

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CONTENTS

OF

THE FOURTH VOLUME.

TALES FOR THE COMMON PEOPLE.

	Page
The History of Tom White the Postboy: in Two Parts	1
The History of Hester Wilmot: in Two Parts; being the Sequel to the Sunday School	42
The Grand Assizes; or, General Gaol Delivery: an Allegory	74
The Servant Man turned Soldier: an Allegory	85
The History of Betty Brown the St. Giles's Orange Girl: with some Account of Mrs. Sponge the Money-Lender	99
Black Giles the Poacher: in Two Parts. Containing some Account of a Family who had rather live by their Wits than their Work	115
Tawney Rachel; or, the Fortune-teller: with some Account of Dreams, Omens, and Conjurers	148

MORAL SKETCHES OF PREVAILING OPINIONS AND MANNERS, FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC.

Page
Preface to the Sixth Edition..... 167
Preface to the First Edition..... 175

FOREIGN SKETCHES.

Foreign Association..... 187
French Opinion of English Society..... 201
English Opinion of French Society..... 213
England's best Hope..... 237

DOMESTIC SKETCHES.

On Soundness in Judgment, and Consistency in Conduct..... 258
Novel Opinions in Religion..... 267
Ill Effects of the late Secession..... 291
Exertions of pious Ladies..... 305
High Profession and negligent Practice..... 320
Auricular Confession..... 331
Unprofitable Reading..... 335
The Borderers..... 343

REFLECTIONS ON PRAYER.

On the Corruption of Human Nature..... 358
False Notions of the Dignity of Man, shown from his Helplessness and Dependence..... 370
The Obligation of Prayer universal. — Regular Seasons to be observed. — The Sceptic and the Sensualist reject Prayer..... 377
Errors in Prayer, which may hinder its being answered. — The Proud Man's Prayer. —

CONTENTS.

Page

The patient Christian. — False Excuses under the Pretence of inability ... [illegible]

God our Father. — Our Unworthiness to [illegible] Him. — Forms of Prayer. — [illegible] Sins. — [illegible] — Benefit of habitual Prayer ... [illegible]

The Doctrine of [illegible] justification [illegible] adopted. — The [illegible] progressive sanctification [illegible] rejected. — The [illegible] of the one and the [illegible] of the other [illegible] Prayer. — St. Paul's Character ... [illegible]

Character of those who expect salvation for their good Works. — of those who depend on a careless nominal Faith. — Both these Characters unfavourable to Prayer. — Christianity a Religion of Love which disposes to Prayer: exhibited in a third Character ... [illegible]

Prayer. — The Condition of [illegible] Blessings. — Useless Contention about Terms ... [illegible]

Vain Excuses for the Neglect of Prayer. — The Man of Business. — [illegible] Ceremonial. — Prayer against the Fear of Death. — Characters to whom this Prayer is recommended ... [illegible]

The Consolations of Prayer. — Its perpetual Obligation ... [illegible]

On intercessory Prayer ... [illegible]

The Praying Christian in the World. — The Promise of Rest to the Christian ... 469

The Lord's Prayer, a Model both for our Devotion and our Practice. — It teaches the Duty of promoting Schemes to advance the Glory of God ... [illegible]

Conclusion ... [illegible]

Page

The patient Christian. — False Excuses under the Pretence of Inability..... 387

God our Father. — Our Unwillingness to please Him. — Forms of Prayer. — Great and Little Sins. — All Sin an Offence against God. — Benefit of habitual Prayer..... 403

The Doctrine of imputed Sanctification, newly adopted. — The old one of progressive Sanctification newly rejected. — The Adoption of the one and the Rejection of the other hostile to Prayer. — St. Paul's Character..... 412

Character of those who expect Salvation for their good Works. — Of those who depend on a careless nominal Faith. — Both these Characters unfavourable to Prayer. — Christianity a Religion of Love which disposes to Prayer, exhibited in a third Character..... 422

Prayer. — The Condition of its attendant Blessings. — Useless Contention about Terms..... 433

Vain Excuses for the Neglect of Prayer. — The Man of Business. — Case of Nehemiah. — Prayer against the Fear of Death. — Characters to whom this Prayer is recommended... 440

The Consolations of Prayer. — Its perpetual Obligation..... 452

On intercessory Prayer..... 463

The Praying Christian in the World. — The Promise of Rest to the Christian..... 469

The Lord's Prayer, a Model both for our Devotion and our Practice. — It teaches the Duty of promoting Schemes to advance the Glory of God..... 482

Conclusion..... 496

TALES

FOR

THE COMMON PEOPLE.

Religion is for the man in humble life, and to raise his nature, and to put him in mind of a state in which the privileges of opulence will cease, when he will be equal by nature, and may be more than equal by virtue. *Burke on the French Revolution.*

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ances in the stable-yard. He soon learnt to compare his own carter's frock, and shoes thick set with nails, with the smart red jacket, and tight boots of the post-boys, and grew ashamed of his own homely dress: he was resolved to drive a chaise, to get money, and to see the world. Foolish fellow! he never considered that though it is true, a waggoner works hard all day, yet he gets a quiet evening at home, and undisturbed rest at night. However, as there must be chaise-boys as well as plough-boys, there was no great harm in the change. The evil company to which it exposed him was the chief mischief. He left Farmer Hodges, though not without sorrow at quitting so kind a master, and got himself hired at the Black Bear.

Notwithstanding the temptations to which he was now exposed, Tom's good education stood by him for some time. At first he was frightened to hear the oaths and wicked words which are too often uttered in a stable-yard. However, though he thought it very wrong, he had not the courage to reprove it, and the next step to being easy at seeing others sin is to sin ourselves. By degrees he began to think it manly, and a mark of spirit in others to swear; though the force of good habits was so strong, that at first when he ventured to swear himself it was with fear, and in a low voice. But he was soon laughed out of his sheepishness, as they called it; and though he never became so profane and blasphemous as some of his companions, (for he never swore in

cool blood, or in mirth, as so many do,) yet he would too often use a dreadful bad word, when he was in a passion with his horses. And here I cannot but drop a hint on the deep folly, as well as wickedness, of being in a great rage with poor beasts, which, not having the gift of reason, cannot be moved like human creatures, with all the wicked words that are said to them; though these dumb creatures, unhappily, having the gift of feeling, suffer as much as human creatures can do, at the cruel and unnecessary beatings given them. Tom had been bred up to think that drunkenness was a great sin, for he never saw Farmer Hodges drunk in his life; and where a farmer is sober himself his men are less likely to drink, or if they do, the master can reprove them with the better grace.

Tom was not naturally fond of drink, yet for the sake of being thought merry company, and a hearty fellow, he often drank more than he ought. As he had been used to go to church twice on a Sunday, while he lived with the farmer, who seldom used his horses on that day, except to carry his wife to church behind him, Tom felt a little uneasy when he was sent, the very first Sunday, a long journey with a great family; for I cannot conceal the truth, that too many gentlefolks will travel, when there is no necessity for it, on a Sunday, and when Monday would answer the end just as well. This is a great grief to all good and sober people, both rich and poor; and it is still more inexcusable in the great, who have

every day at their command. However, he kept his thoughts to himself, though he could not now and then help thinking how quietly things were going on at the farmer's, whose waggoner, on a Sunday, led as easy a life as if he had been a gentleman. But he soon lost all thoughts of this kind, and in time did not know Sunday from Monday. Tom went on prosperously, as it is called, for three or four years, got plenty of money, but saved not a shilling. As soon as his horses were once in the stable, whoever would might see them fed for Tom. He had other fish to fry. Fives, cards, cudgel-playing, laying wagers, and keeping loose company, each of which he at first disliked, and each of which he soon learned to practise, ran away with all his money, and all his spare time; and though he was generally in the way as soon as the horses were ready, because if there was no driving there was no pay, yet he did not care whether the carriage was clean or dirty, if the horses looked well or ill, if the harness was whole, or the horses were shod. The certainty that the gains of to-morrow would make up for the extravagance of to-day made him quite thoughtless and happy; for he was young, active, and healthy, and never foresaw that a rainy day might come, when he would want what he now squandered.

One day being a little flustered with liquor as he was driving his return chaise through Brentford, he saw just before him another empty carriage, driven by one of his acquaintance: he

whipped up his horses, resolving to outstrip the other, and swearing dreadfully that he would be at the Red Lion first — for a pint. — "Done," cried the other — "a wager." Both cut and spurred the poor beasts with the usual fury, as if their credit had been really at stake, or their lives had depended on this foolish contest. Tom's chaise had now got up to that of his rival, and they drove along-side of each other with great fury and many imprecations. But in a narrow part, Tom's chaise being in the middle, with his antagonist on one side, and a cart driving against him on the other, the horses reared, the carriages got entangled; Tom roared out a great oath to the other to stop, which he either could not or would not do, but returned an horrid imprecation that he would win the wager if he was alive. Tom's horses took fright, and he himself was thrown to the ground with great violence. As soon as he could be got from under the wheels, he was taken up senseless, his leg was broke in two places, and his body much bruised. Some people, whom the noise had brought together, put him in the post-chaise, in which the waggoner kindly assisted, but the other driver seemed careless and indifferent, and drove off, observing with a brutal coolness, I am sorry I have lost my pint: I should have beat him hollow, had it not been for this *little accident.* Some gentlemen who came out of the inn, after reprimanding this savage, enquired who he was, wrote to inform his master, and got him discharged; resolving that neither they nor

any of their friends would ever employ him, — and he was long out of place, and nobody ever cared to be driven by him.

Tom was taken to one of those excellent hospitals with which London abounds. His agonies were dreadful, his leg was set, and a high fever came on. As soon as he was left alone to reflect on his condition, his first thought was that he should die, and his horror was inconceivable. — "Alas!" said he, "what will become of my poor soul? I am cut off in the very commission of three great sins: — I was drunk, I was in a horrible passion, and I had oaths and blasphemies in my mouth." — He tried to pray, but he could not; his mind was all distraction, and he thought he was so very wicked that God would not forgive him: "because," says he, "I have sinned against light and knowledge; I have had a sober education, and good examples; I was bred in the fear of God and the knowledge of Christ, and I deserve nothing but punishment." At length he grew light-headed, and there was little hope of his life. Whenever he came to his senses for a few minutes, he cried out, "Oh! that my old companions could now see me: surely they would take warning by my sad fate, and repent before it is too late."

By the blessing of God on the skill of the surgeon, and the care of the nurses, he, however, grew better in a few days. And here let me stop to remark what a mercy it is that we live in a Christian country, where the poor, when sick, or lame, or wounded, are taken as much care of as

any gentry; nay, in some respects more, because in hospitals and infirmaries there are more doctors and surgeons to attend than most private gentlefolks can afford to have at their own houses, whereas THERE NEVER WAS AN HOSPITAL IN THE WHOLE HEATHEN WORLD. Blessed be God for this, among the thousand other excellent fruits of the Christian religion! A religion which, like its Divine Founder, while its grand object is the salvation of men's souls, teaches us also to relieve their bodily wants. It directs us never to forget that He who forgave sins healed diseases, and while he preached the Gospel, fed the multitude.

It was eight weeks before Tom could be taken out of bed. This was a happy affliction; for by the grace of God, this long sickness and solitude gave him time to reflect on his past life. He began seriously to hate those darling sins which had brought him to the brink of ruin. He could now pray heartily: he confessed and lamented his iniquities with many tears, and began to hope that the mercies of God, through the merits of a Redeemer, might yet be extended to him on his sincere repentance. He resolved never more to return to the same evil courses, but he did not trust in his own strength, he prayed that God would give him grace for the future, as well as pardon for the past. He remembered, and he was humbled at the thought, that he used to have short fits of repentance, and to form resolutions of amendment in his wild and thoughtless days; and often when he had a bad headach after a drinking

bout, or had lost his money at all-fours, he vowed never to drink or play again. But as soon as his head was well, and his pockets recruited, he forgot all his resolutions. And how should it be otherwise? for he trusted in his own strength; he never prayed to God to strengthen him, nor ever avoided the next temptation. He thought that amendment was a thing to be set about at any time; he did not know that *it is the grace of God which bringeth us to repentance.*

The case was now different. Tom began to find that *his strength was perfect weakness*, and that he could do nothing without the Divine assistance, for which he prayed heartily and constantly. He sent home for his Bible and Prayer-book, which he had not opened for two years, and which had been given him when he left the Sunday-school. He spent the chief part of his time in reading them, and derived great comfort, as well as great knowledge, from this employment of his time. The study of the Bible filled his heart with gratitude to God, who had not cut him off in the midst of his sins, but had given him space for repentance; and the agonies he had lately suffered with his broken leg increased his thankfulness, that he had escaped the more dreadful pain of eternal misery. And here let me remark what encouragement this is for rich people to give away Bibles and good books, and not to lose all hope, though, for a time, they see little or no good effect from it. According to all appearance, Tom's books were never likely to do him any good; and yet his

generous benefactor, who had cast his bread upon the waters, found it after many days; for this Bible, which had lain untouched for years, was at last made the intrument of his reformation. God will work in his own good time, and in his own way, but *our* zeal and *our* exertions are the means by which he commonly chooses to work.

As soon as he got well, and was discharged from the hospital, Tom began to think he must return to get his bread. At first he had some scruples about going back to his old employ: "but," says he sensibly enough, "gentlefolks must travel, travellers must have chaises, and chaises must have drivers: 'tis a very honest calling, and I don't know that goodness belongs to one sort of business more than another; and he who can be good in a state of great temptation, provided the calling be lawful, and the temptations are not of his own seeking, and he be diligent in prayer, may be better than another man for aught I know: and *all that belongs to us is, to do our duty in that state of life in which it shall please God to call us;* and to leave events in God's hand." Tom had rubbed up his catechism at the hospital, — and 'tis a pity that people don't look at their catechism sometimes when they are grown up; for it is full as good for men and women as it is for children; nay, better; for though the answers contained in it are intended for children to *repeat*, yet the duties enjoined in it are intended for men and women to put in *practice*. It is, if I may so speak, the very grammar of Christianity and of

our church; and they who understand every part of their catechism thoroughly will not be ignorant of any thing which a plain Christian need to know.

Tom now felt grieved that he was obliged to drive on Sundays. But people who are in earnest, and have their hearts in a thing, can find helps in all cases. As soon as he had set down his company at their stage, and had seen his horses fed, says Tom, "A man who takes care of his horses will generally think it right to let them rest an hour or two at least. In every town it is a chance but there may be a church open during part of that time. If the prayers should be over, I'll try hard for the sermon; and if I dare not stay to the sermon, it is a chance but I may catch the prayers: it is worth trying for, however; and as I used to think nothing of making a push, for the sake of getting an hour to gamble, I need not grudge to take a little pains extraordinary to serve God." By this watchfulness he soon got to know the hours of service at all the towns on the road he travelled; and while the horses fed, Tom went to church; and it became a favourite proverb with him, that *prayers and provender hinder no man's journey*; and I beg leave to recommend Tom's maxim to all travellers, whether master or servant, carrier or coachman.

At first his companions wanted to laugh and make sport of this;—but when they saw that no lad on the road was up so early or worked so hard as Tom; when they saw no chaise so neat, no glasses so bright, no harness so tight, no driver so diligent,

so clean, or so civil, they found he was no subject to make sport at. Tom, indeed, was very careful in looking after the linch-pins; in never giving his horses too much water when they were hot; nor, whatever was his haste, would he ever gallop them up hill, strike them across the head, or, when tired, cut and slash them, or gallop over the stones, as soon as he got into a town, as some foolish fellows do. What helped to cure Tom of these bad practices was that remark he met with in the Bible, that *a good man is merciful to his beast.* He was much moved one day on reading the prophet Jonah, to observe what compassion the great God of heaven and earth had for poor beasts: for one of the reasons there given why the Almighty was unwilling to destroy the great city of Nineveh was, *because there was much cattle in it.* After this, Tom never could bear to see a wanton stroke inflicted. "Doth God care for horses," said he, "and shall man be cruel to them?"

Tom soon grew rich for one in his station; for every gentleman on the road would be driven by no other lad if *careful Tom* was to be had. Being diligent, he *got* a great deal of money; being frugal, he *spent* but little; and having no vices, he *wasted* none. He soon found out that there was some meaning in that text which says, that *Godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come:* for the same principles which make a man sober and honest have also a natural tendency to make him healthy and rich; while a drunkard and a spendthrift can hardly escape being

sick and a beggar. Vice is the parent of misery in both worlds.

After a few years Tom begged a holiday, and made a visit to his native village: his good character had got thither before him. He found his father was dead; but, during his long illness, Tom had supplied him with money; and, by allowing him a trifle every week, had had the honest satisfaction of keeping him from the parish. Farmer Hodges was still living; but, being grown old and infirm, he was desirous to retire from business. He retained a great regard for his old servant, Tom; and finding he was worth money, and knowing he knew something of country business, he offered to let him a small farm at an easy rate, and promised his assistance in the management for the first year, with the loan of a small sum of money, that he might set out with a pretty stock. Tom thanked him with tears in his eyes, went back and took a handsome leave of his master, who made him a present of a horse and cart, in acknowledgment of his long and faithful services: "for," says he, "I have saved many horses by Tom's care and attention, and I could well afford to do the same by every servant who did the same by me; and should be a richer man at the end of every year by the same generosity, provided I could meet with just and faithful servants who deserved the same rewards."

Tom was soon settled in his new farm, and in less than a year had got every thing neat and decent about him. Farmer Hodges's long experience and

friendly advice, joined to his own industry and hard labour, soon brought the farm to great perfection. The regularity, sobriety, peaceableness, and piety of his daily life, his constant attendance at church twice every Sunday, and his decent and devout behaviour when there, soon recommended him to the notice of Dr. Shepherd, who was still living, a pattern of zeal, activity, and benevolence to all parish priests. The doctor soon began to hold up Tom, or, as we must now properly term him, Mr. Thomas White, to the imitation of the whole parish; and the frequent and condescending conversation of this worthy clergyman contributed no less than his preaching to the improvement of his new parishioner in piety.

Farmer White soon found out that a dairy could not well be carried on without a mistress, and began to think seriously of marrying: he prayed to God to direct him in so important a business. He knew that a tawdry, vain, dressy girl was not likely to make good cheese and butter, and that a worldly and ungodly woman would make a sad wife and mistress of a family. He soon heard of a young woman of excellent character, who had been bred up by the vicar's lady, and still lived in the family as upper maid. She was prudent, sober, industrious, and religious. Her neat, modest, and plain appearance at church, for she was seldom seen any where else out of her master's family, was an example to all persons in her station, and never failed to recommend her to strangers, even before they had an opportunity of knowing the goodness of her

character. It was her character, however, which recommended her to Farmer White. He knew that *favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman that feareth the Lord she shall be praised* — ay, and not only praised, but chosen too, says Farmer White, as he took down his hat from the nail on which it hung, in order to go and wait on Dr. Shepherd, to break his mind and ask his consent; for he thought it would be a very unhandsome return for all the favours he was receiving from his minister, to decoy away his faithful servant from her place without his consent.

This worthy gentleman, though sorry to lose so valuable a member of his little family, did not scruple a moment about parting with her, when he found it would be so greatly to her advantage. Tom was agreeably surprised to hear she had saved fifty pounds by her frugality. The doctor married them himself, Farmer Hodges being present.

In the afternoon of the wedding-day, Dr. Shepherd condescended to call on Farmer and Mrs. White, to give a few words of advice on the new duties they had entered into, — a common custom with him on those occasions. He often took an opportunity to drop, in the most kind and tender way, a hint on the great indecency of making marriages, christenings, and, above all, funerals, days of riot and excess, as is too often the case in country villages. The expectation that the vicar might possibly drop in, in his walks, on these festivities, often restrained excessive drinking, and improper

conversation, even among those who were not restrained by higher motives, as Farmer and Mrs. White were.

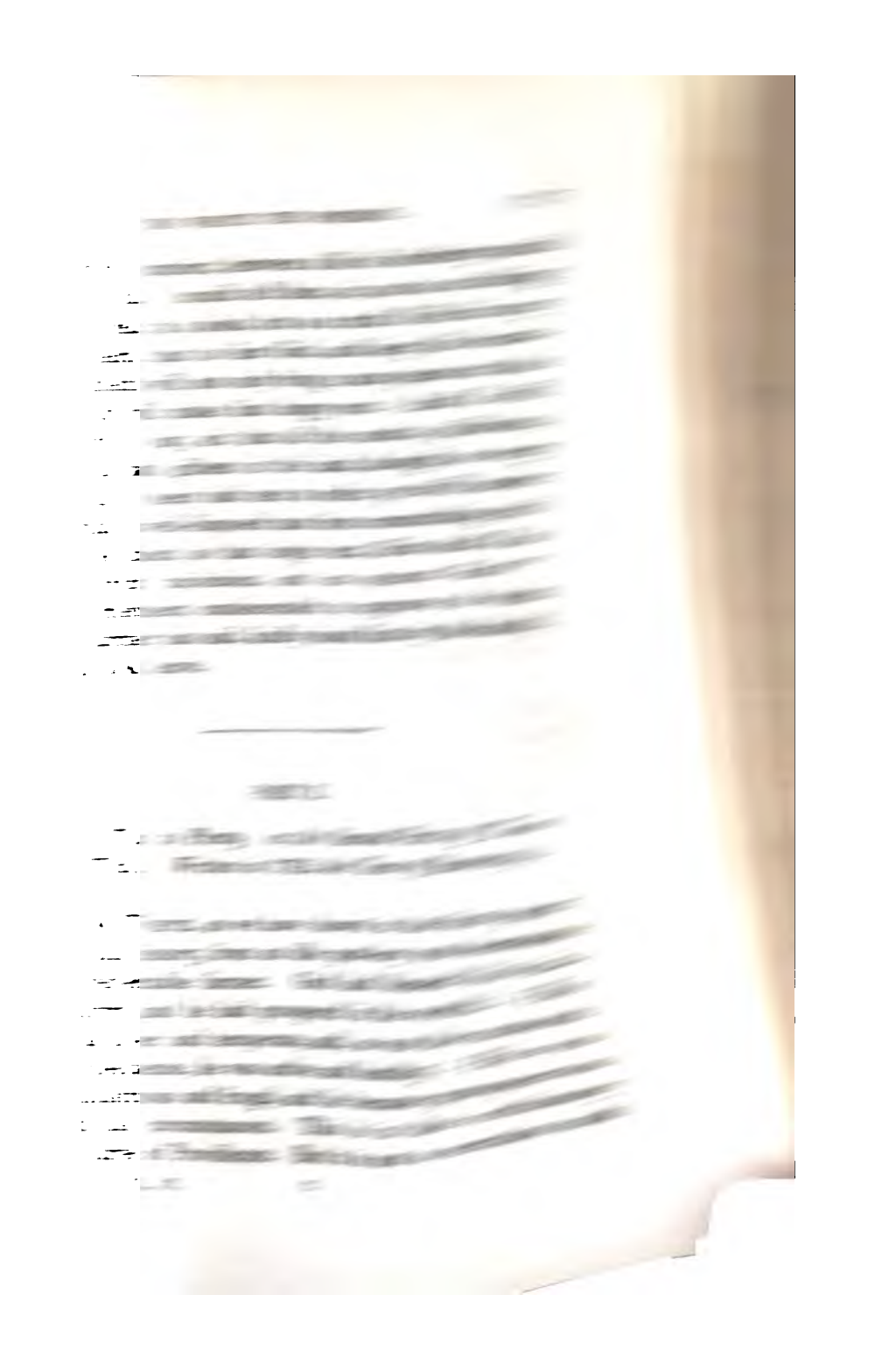
What the doctor said was always in such a cheerful, good-humoured way, that it was sure to increase the pleasure of the day, instead of damping it. "Well, Farmer," said he, "and you, my faithful Sarah, any other friend might recommend peace and agreement to you on your marriage; but I, on the contrary, recommend cares and strifes."* The company stared; but Sarah, who knew that her old master was a facetious gentleman, and always had some good meaning behind, looked serious. "Cares and strifes, sir!" said the farmer, "what do you mean?"—"I mean," said he, "for the first, that your cares shall be who shall please God most, and your strifes, who shall serve him best, and do your duty most faithfully. Thus, all your cares and strifes being employed to the highest purposes, all petty cares and worldly strifes shall be at an end.

"Always remember, that you have, both of you, a better friend than each other." The company stared again, and thought no woman could have so good a friend as her husband. "As you have chosen each other from the best motives," continued the doctor, "you have every reasonable ground to hope for happiness; but as this world is a soil in which troubles and misfortunes will spring up,—troubles from which you cannot save one another, misfortunes which no human pru-

* See Dodd's Sayings.

dence can avoid, — then remember 'tis the best wisdom to go to that friend who is always near, always willing, and always able to help you; and that friend is God."

"Sir," said Farmer White, "I humbly thank you for all your kind instructions, of which I shall now stand more in need than ever, as I shall have more duties to fulfil. I hope the remembrance of my past offences will keep me humble, and the sense of my remaining sin will keep me watchful. I set out in the world, sir, with what is called a good natural disposition; but I soon found, to my cost, that without God's grace, that will carry a man but a little way. A good temper is a good thing; but nothing but the fear of God can enable one to bear up against temptation, evil company, and evil passions. The misfortune of breaking my leg, as I then thought it, has proved the greatest blessing of my life. It showed me my own weakness, the value of the Bible, and the goodness of God. How many of my brother drivers have I seen, since that time, cut off in the prime of life by drinking, or by some sudden accident, while I have not only been spared, but blessed and prospered. O, sir! it would be the joy of my heart, if some of my old comrades, good natured, civil fellows, whom I can't help loving, could see, as I have done, the danger of evil courses before it is too late. Though they may not hearken to you, sir, or any other minister, they may believe *me*, because I have been one of them; and I can speak from experience of the great difference there is, even as



necessary rule. *God maketh his sun to shine on the just and the unjust.* A man who uses every honest means of thrift and industry, will, in most cases, find success attend his labours. But still the *race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.* God is sometimes pleased, for wise ends, to disappoint all the worldly hopes of the most upright man. His corn may be smitten by a blight; his barns may be consumed by fire; his cattle may be carried off by distemper. And to these, and other misfortunes, the good man is as liable as the spendthrift or the knave. Success is the *common* reward of industry; but if it were its *constant* reward, the industrious would be tempted to look no further than the present state. They would lose one strong ground of their faith: it would set aside the Scripture scheme. This world would then be looked on as a state of reward, instead of a state of trial, and we should forget to look to a day of final retribution.

Farmer White never took it into his head that because he paid his debts, worked early and late, and ate the bread of carefulness, he was therefore to come into no *misfortune like other folk*, but was to be free from the common trials and troubles of life. He knew that prosperity was far from being a sure mark of God's favour, and had read in good books, and especially in the Bible, of the great poverty and afflictions of the best of men. Though he was no great scholar, he had sense enough to observe, that a time of public prosperity was not always a time of public virtue; and he thought

that what was true of a whole nation might be true of one man. So the more he prospered the more he prayed that prosperity might not corrupt his heart; and when he saw lately signs of public distress coming on, he was not half so much frightened as some others were, because he thought it might do us good in the long run; and he was in hopes that a little poverty might bring on a little penitence. The great grace he laboured after was that of a cheerful submission. He used to say, that if the Lord's prayer had only contained those four little words, *Thy will be done*, it would be worth more than the biggest book in the world without them.

Dr. Shepherd, the worthy vicar, with whom the farmer's wife had formerly lived as housekeeper, was very fond of taking a walk with him about his grounds; and he used to say, that he learnt as much from the farmer as the farmer did from him. If the doctor happened to observe, "I am afraid these long rains will spoil this fine piece of oats," the farmer would answer, "But then, sir, think how good it is for the grass." If the doctor feared the wheat would be but indifferent, the farmer was sure the rye would turn out well. When grass failed, he did not doubt but turnips would be plenty. Even for floods and inundations he would find out some way to justify Providence. "'Tis better," said he, "to have our lands a little overflowed, than that the springs should be dried up, and our cattle faint for lack of water." When the drought came, he thanked God that the season

would be healthy; and high winds, which frightened others, he said served to clear the air. Whoever, or whatever was wrong, he was always sure that Providence was in the right; and he used to say, that a man with ever so small an income, if he had but frugality and temperance, and would cut off all vain desires, and cast his care upon God, was richer than a lord who was tormented by vanity and covetousness. When he saw others in the wrong, he did not, however, abuse them for it, but took care to avoid the same fault. He had sense and spirit enough to break through many old but very bad customs of his neighbours. "If a thing is wrong in itself," said he one day to Farmer Hodges, "a whole parish doing it can't make it right; and as to its being an old custom, why, if it be a good one, I like it the better for being old, because it has had the stamp of ages, and the sanction of experience on its worth: but if it be old as well as bad, that is another reason for my trying to put an end to it, that we may not mislead our children as our fathers have misled us."

The Roof-raising.

Some years after he was settled, he built a large new barn. All the workmen were looking forward to the usual holiday of roof-raising. On this occasion it was a custom to give a dinner to the workmen, with so much liquor after it that they got so drunk, that they not only lost the re-

maining half-day's work, but they were not always able to work the following day.

Mrs. White provided a plentiful dinner for roof-raising, and gave each man his mug of beer. After a hearty meal they began to grow clamorous for more drink. The farmer said, "My lads, I don't grudge you a few gallons of ale merely for the sake of saving my liquor, though that is some consideration, especially in these dear times; but I never will, knowingly, help any man to make a beast of himself. I am resolved to break through a bad custom. You are now well refreshed. If you will go cheerfully to your work, you will have half a day's pay to take on Saturday night more than you would have, if this afternoon were wasted in drunkenness. For this your families will be the better: whereas, were I to give you more liquor, when you have already had enough, I should help to rob them of their bread. But I wish to show you that I have your good at heart full as much as my own profit. If you will now go to work, I will give you all another mug at night when you leave off. Thus your time will be saved, your families helped, and my ale will not go to make reasonable creatures worse than brute beasts."

Here he stopped. "You are in the right on't, master," said Tom the thatcher; "You are a hearty man, farmer," said John Plane, the carpenter. — "Come along, boys," said Tim Brick the mason; so they all went merrily to work, fortified with a good dinner. There was only one drunken surly

fellow that refused; this was Dick Guzzle the smith. Dick never works above two or three days in the week, and spends the others at the Red Lion. He swore, that if the farmer did not give him as much liquor as he liked at roof-raising he would not strike another stroke, but would leave the job unfinished, and he might get hands where he could. Farmer White took him at his word, and paid him off directly; glad enough to get rid of such a sot, whom he had only employed from pity to a large and almost starving family. When the men came for their mug in the evening, the farmer brought out the remains of the cold gammon: they made a hearty supper, and thanked him for having broken through a foolish custom, which was afterwards much left off in that parish, though Dick would not come into it, and lost most of his work in consequence.

Farmer White's labourers were often complaining, that things were so dear that they could not buy a bit of meat. He knew it was partly true, but not entirely; for it was before these very hard times that their complaints began. One morning he stept out to see how an outhouse which he was thatching went on. He was surprised to find the work at a stand. He walked over to the thatcher's house. "Tom," said he, "I desire that piece of work may be finished directly. If a shower comes my grain will be spoiled." — "Indeed, master, I shan't work to-day, nor to-morrow neither," said Tom. "You forget that 'tis Easter Monday, and to-morrow is Easter Tuesday. And

so on Wednesday I shall thatch away, master. But 'tis hard if a poor man, who works all the seasons round, may not enjoy these few holidays, which come but once a year."

"Tom," said the farmer, "when these days were first put into our Prayer-book, the good men who ordained them to be kept little thought that the time would come when *holy-day* should mean *drunken-day*, and that the seasons which they meant to distinguish by superior piety, should be converted into seasons of more than ordinary excess. How much dost think now I shall pay thee for this piece of thatch?" — "Why you know, master, you have let it to me by the great. I think between this and to-morrow night as the weather is so fine, I could clear about four shillings, after I have paid my boy; but thatching does not come often, and other work is not so profitable." — "Very well, Tom; and how much now do you think you may spend in these two holidays?" — "Why, master, if the ale is pleasant and the company merry, I do not expect to get off for less than three shillings." — "Tom, can you do pounds, shillings, and pence?" — "I can make a little score, master, behind the kitchen door, with a bit of chalk, which is as much as I want." — "Well, Tom, add the four shillings you would have earned to the three you intend to spend, what does that make?" — "Let me see! three and four make seven. Seven shillings, master." — "Tom, you often tell me the times are so bad that you can never buy a bit of meat.

Now here is the cost of two joints at once; to say nothing of the sin of wasting time and getting drunk." — "I never once thought of that," said Tom. — "Now, Tom," said the farmer, "If I were you, I would step over to Butcher Jobbins's, buy a shoulder of mutton, which being left from Saturday's market you will get a little cheaper. This I would make my wife bake in a deep dish full of potatoes. I would then go to work, and when the dinner was ready I would go and enjoy it with my wife and children; you need not give the mutton to the brats; the potatoes will have all the gravy, and be very savoury for them." — "Ay, but I've got no beer, master: the times are so hard that a poor man can't afford to brew a drop of drink now as we used to do."

"Times are bad, and malt is very dear, Tom, and yet both don't prevent you from spending seven shillings in keeping holiday. Now send for a quart of ale, as it is to be a feast; and you will even then be four shillings richer than if you had gone to the public-house. I would have you put by these four shillings, till you can add a couple to them: with this I would get a bushel of malt, and my wife should brew it; and you may take a pint of your own beer at home of a night, which will do you more good than a gallon at the Red Lion." — "I have a great mind to take your advice, master; but I shall be made such fun of at the Lion! they will so laugh at me if I don't go!" — "Let those laugh that win, Tom." — "But, master, I have got a friend to meet me there." —

"Then ask your friend to come and eat a bit of your cold mutton at night, and here is sixpence for another pot, if you will promise to brew a small cask of your own." — "Thank you, master, and so I will; and I won't go to the Lion. Come, boy, bring the helm, and fetch the ladder." And so Tom was upon the roof in a twinkling. The barn was thatched, the mutton bought, the beer brewed, the friend invited, and the holiday enjoyed.

The Sheap-shearing.

Dr. Shepherd happened to say to Farmer White one day, that there was nothing he disliked more than the manner in which sheap-shearing and harvest-home were kept by some in his parish. "What!" said the good doctor, "just when we are blest with a prosperous gathering in of these natural riches of our land, the fleece of our flocks; when our barns are crowned with plenty, and we have, through the Divine blessing on our honest labour, reaped the fruits of the earth in due season; is that very time to be set apart for ribaldry, and riot, and drunkenness? Do we thank God for his mercies, by making ourselves unworthy and unfit to enjoy them? When he crowns the year with his goodness shall we affront him by our impiety? It is more than a common insult to his providence; it is a worse than brutal return to *Him* who openeth His hand and filleth all things living with plenteousness."

"I thank you for the hint, sir," said the farmer.

"I am resolved to rejoice though, and others shall rejoice with me; and we will have a merry night on't."

So Mrs. White dressed a very plentiful supper of meat and pudding, and spread out two tables. The farmer sat at the head of one, consisting of some of his neighbours, and all his work-people. At the other sat his wife, with two long benches on each side of her. On these benches sat all the old and infirm poor, especially those who lived in the workhouse, and had no day of festivity to look forward to in the whole year but this. On the grass, in the little court, sat the children of his labourers, and of the other poor, whose employment it had been to gather flowers, and dress and adorn the horns of the ram; for the farmer did not wish to put an end to any old custom, if it was innocent. His own children stood by the table, and he gave them plenty of pudding, which they carried to the children of the poor, with a little draught of cider to every one. The farmer, who never sat down without begging a blessing on his meal, did it with suitable solemnity on the present joyful occasion.

Dr. Shepherd practised one very useful method, which, I dare say, was not peculiar to himself; a method of which I doubt not other country clergymen have found the advantage. He was often on the watch to observe those seasons when a number of his parishioners assembled together, not only at any season of festivity but at their work. He has been known to turn a walk through a hay-

field to good account, and has been found to do as much good by a few minutes' discourse with a little knot of reapers as by his Sunday's sermon. He commonly introduced his religious observations by some questions relating to their employment: he first gained their affections by his kindness, and then converted his influence over them to their soul's good. The interest he took in their worldly affairs opened their hearts to the reception of those Divine truths which he was always earnest to impress upon them. By these methods, too, he got acquainted with their several characters, their spiritual wants, their individual sins, dangers, and temptations, which enabled him to preach with more knowledge and successful application than those ministers can do who are unacquainted with the state of their congregations. It was a remark of Dr. Shepherd's, that a thorough acquaintance with human nature was one of the most important species of knowledge a clergyman could possess.

The sheep-shearing feast, though orderly and decent, was yet hearty and cheerful. Dr. Shepherd dropped in with a good deal of company he had at his house, and they were much pleased. When the doctor saw how the aged and the infirm poor were enjoying themselves, he was much moved: he shook the farmer by the hand, and said, "But thou, when thou makest a feast, call the blind, and the lame, and the halt: they cannot recompense thee; but thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just."

"Sir," said the farmer, "'tis no great matter of expense. I kill a sheep of my own; potatoes are as plenty as black-berries with people who have a little forethought. I save much more cider in the course of a year by never allowing any carousing in my kitchen, or drunkenness in my fields, than would supply many such feasts as these; so that I shall be never the poorer at Christmas. It is cheaper to make people happy, sir, than to make them drunk." The doctor and the ladies condescended to walk from one table to the other, and heard many merry stories, but not one profane word, or one indecent song; so that he was not forced to the painful necessity either of reproving them or leaving them in anger. When all was over, they sung the sixty-fifth psalm, and the ladies all joined in it; and when they got home to the vicarage to tea, they declared they liked it better than any concert.

*The Hard Winter.**

In the famous cold winter of the year 1795, it was edifying to see how patiently Farmer White bore that long and severe frost. Many of his sheep were frozen to death, but he thanked God that he had still many left. He continued to find in-door work, that his men might not be out of employ. The season being so bad, which some others pleaded as an excuse for turning off their workmen, he thought a fresh reason for keeping them. Mrs. White was so considerate, that just

* Written during the scarcity of 1795.

at that time she lessened the number of her hogs, that she might have more whey and skim-milk to assist poor families; nay, I have known her live on boiled meat for a long while together, in a sickly season, because the pot-liquor made such a supply of broth for the sick poor. As the spring came on, and things grew worse, she never had a cake, a pie, or a pudding in her house; notwithstanding she used to have plenty of these good things, and will again, I hope, when the present scarcity is over; though she says she never will use such white flour again, even if it should come down to five shillings a bushel.

All the parish now began to murmur. Farmer Jones was sure the frost had killed the wheat; Farmer Wilson said the rye would never come up; Brown, the maltster, insisted the barley was dead at the root; Butcher Jobbins said beef would be a shilling a pound. All declared there would not be a hop to brew with. The orchards were all blighted: there would not be apples enough to make a pie; and as to hay, there would be none to be had for love nor money. "I'll tell you what," said Farmer White, "the season is dreadful; the crops are unpromising just now; but 'tis too early to judge. Don't let us make things worse than they are. We ought to comfort the poor, and you are driving them to despair. Don't you know how much God was displeased with the murmurs of his chosen people? And yet, when they were tired of manna, he sent them quails; but all did not do. Nothing satisfies grumblers. We

have a promise on our side, that *there shall be seed-time and harvest-time to the end.* Let us, then, hope for a good day, but provide against an evil one. Let us rather prevent the evil before it is come upon us, than sink under it when it comes. Grumbling cannot help us; activity can. Let us set about planting potatoes in every nook and corner, in case the corn *should* fail; which, however, I don't believe will be the case. Let us mend our management, before we are driven to it by actual want. And if we allow our honest labourers to plant a few potatoes for their families in the head-lands of our ploughed fields, or other waste bits of ground, it will do us no harm, and be a great help to them. The way to lighten the load of any public calamity is not to murmur at it, but put a hand to lessen it."

The farmer had many temptations to send his corn, at an extravagant price, to *a certain sea-port town;* but as he knew that it was intended to export it against law, he would not be tempted to encourage unlawful gain; so he threshed out a small mow at a time, and sold it to the neighbouring poor far below the market-price. He served his own workmen first. This was the same to them as if he had raised their wages, and even better, as it was a benefit of which their families were sure to partake. If the poor in the next parish were more distressed than his own, he sold to them at the same rate. "For," said he, "there is no distinction of parishes in heaven; and though

charity begins at home, yet it ought not to end there."

He had been used, in good times, now and then to catch a hare or a partridge, as he was qualified; but he now resolved to give up that pleasure. So he parted from a couple of spaniels he had; for he said he could not bear that his dogs should be eating the meat, or the milk, which so many men, women, and children wanted.

The White Loaf.

One day, it was about the middle of last July, when things seemed to be at the dearest, and the rulers of the land had agreed to set the example of eating nothing but coarse bread, Dr. Shepherd read, before sermon in the church, their public declaration, which the magistrates of the county sent him, and which they had also signed themselves. Mrs. White, of course, was at church, and commended it mightily. Next morning the doctor took a walk over to the farmer's, in order to settle further plans for the relief of the parish. He was much surprised to meet Mrs. White's little maid, Sally, with a very small white loaf, which she had been buying at a shop. He said nothing to the girl, as he never thought it right to expose the faults of a mistress to her servant; but walked on, resolving to give Mrs. White a severe lecture for the first time in his life. He soon changed his mind; for on going into the kitchen, the first person he saw was Tom the thatcher, who had had a sad fall from a ladder: his arm, which was slipped

out of his sleeve, was swelled in a frightful manner. Mrs. White was standing at the dresser making the little white loaf into a poultice, which she laid upon the swelling in a large clean old linen cloth.

"I ask your pardon, my good Sarah," said the doctor: "I ought not, however appearances were against you, to have suspected that so humble and prudent a woman as you are would be led either to indulge any daintiness of your own, or to fly in the face of your betters, by eating white bread while they are eating brown. Whenever I come here, I see it is not needful to be rich in order to be charitable. A bountiful rich man would have sent Tom to a surgeon, who would have done no more for him than you have done; for in those inflammations the most skilful surgeon could only apply a poultice. Your kindness in dressing the wound yourself will, I doubt not, perform the cure at the expense of that threepenny loaf and a little hog's lard. And I will take care that Tom shall have a good supply of rice from the subscription." — "And he shan't want for skim-milk," said Mrs. White; "and was he the best lord in the land, in the state he is in, a dish of good rice milk would be better for him than the richest meat."

The Parish Meeting.

On the tenth of August the vestry held another meeting, to consult on the best method of further assisting the poor. The prospect of abundant

crops now cheered every heart. Farmer White, who had a mind to be a little jocular with his desponding neighbours, said, "Well, Neighbour Jones, all the wheat was killed, I suppose! the barley is all dead at the root!" Farmer Jones looked sheepish, and said, "To be sure the crops had turned out better than he thought." — "Then," said Dr. Shepherd, "let us learn to trust Providence another time; let our experience of his past goodness strengthen our faith."

Among other things they agreed to subscribe for a large quantity of rice, which was to be sold out to the poor at a very low price, and Mrs. White was so kind as to undertake the trouble of selling it. After their day's work was over, all who wished to buy at these reduced rates were ordered to come to the farm on the Tuesday evening. Dr. Shepherd dropped in at the same time, and when Mrs. White had done weighing her rice, the doctor spoke as follows:—

"My honest friends, it has pleased God, for some wise end, to visit this land with a scarcity, to which we have been but little accustomed. There are some idle, evil-minded people, who are on the watch for public distresses; not that they may humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, which is the true use to be made of all troubles, but that they may benefit themselves by disturbing the public peace. These people, by riot and drunkenness, double the evil which they pretend to cure. Riot will complete our misfortunes; while peace, industry, and good manage-

ment, will go near to cure them. Bread, to be sure, is uncommonly dear. Among the various ways of making it cheaper, one is to reduce the quality of it, another to lesson the quantity we consume. If we cannot get enough of coarse wheaten bread, let us make it of other grain. Or let us mix one half of potatoes, and one half of wheat. This last is what I eat in my own family: it is pleasant and wholesome. Our blessed Saviour ate barley bread, you know, as we are told in the last month's Sunday Reading of the Cheap Repository, which I hope you have all heard; as I desired the master of the Sunday-school to read it just after evening service, when I know many of the parents are apt to call in at the school. This is a good custom, and one of those little books shall be often read at that time.

"My good women, I truly feel for you at this time of scarcity; and I am going to show my good will, as much by my advice as my subscription. It is my duty, as your friend and minister, to tell you, that one half of your present hardships is owing to *bad management.* I often meet your children without shoes and stockings, with great luncheons of the very whitest bread, and that three times a day. Half that quantity, and still less if it were coarse, put into a dish of good onion or leek porridge, would make them an excellent breakfast. Many, too, of the very poorest of you, eat your bread hot from the oven; this makes the difference of one loaf in five; I assure you, 'tis what I cannot afford to do. Come, Mrs. White,

you must assist me a little. I am not very knowing in these matters myself; but I know that the rich would be twice as charitable as they are, if the poor made a better use of their bounty. Mrs. White, do give these poor women a little advice how to make their pittance go further than it now does. When you lived with me you were famous for making us nice cheap dishes, and I dare say you are not less notable now you manage for yourself."

"Indeed, neighbours," said Mrs. White, "what the good doctor says is very true. A halfpenny worth of oatmeal, or groats, with a leek or onion out of your own garden, which costs nothing, a bit of salt, and a little coarse bread, will breakfast your whole family. It is a great mistake at any time to think a bit of meat is so ruinous, and a great load of bread so cheap. A poor man gets seven or eight shillings a week: if he is careful he brings it home. I dare not say how much of this goes for tea in the afternoon, now sugar and butter are so dear, because I should have you all upon me; but I will say, that too much of this little goes even for bread, from a mistaken notion that it is the hardest fare. This, at all times, but particularly just now, is bad management. Dry pease, to be sure, have been very dear lately; but now they are plenty enough. I am certain, then, that if a shilling or two of the seven or eight was laid out for a bit of coarse beef, a sheep's head, or any such thing, it would be well bestowed. I would throw a couple of pounds of this into the

A Cheap Stew.

"I REMEMBER," said Mrs. White, "a cheap dish, so nice that it makes my mouth water. I peel some raw potatoes, slice them thin, put the slices into a deep frying-pan, or pot, with a little water, an onion, and a bit of pepper. Then I get a bone or two of a breast of mutton, or a little strip of salt pork, and put into it. Cover it down close, keep in the steam, and let it stew for an hour."

"You really get me an appetite, Mrs. White, by your dainty receipts," said the doctor. "I am resolved to have this dish at my own table." — "I could tell you another very good dish, and still cheaper," answered she. "Come, let us have it," cried the doctor. "I shall write all down as soon as I get home: and I will favour any body with a copy of these receipts who will call at my house." — "And I will do more, sir," said Mrs. White, "for I will put any of these women in the way how to dress it the first time, if they are at a loss. But this is my dish: —

"Take two or three pickled herrings, put them into a stone jar, fill it up with potatoes, and a little water, and let it bake in the oven till it is done. I would give one hint more," added she: "I have taken to use nothing but potatoe starch: and though I say it, that should not say it, nobody's linen in a common way looks better than ours."

The doctor now said, "I am sorry for one hardship which many poor people labour under, — I mean the difficulty of getting a little milk. I wish all

of? And I remember, when it was cold, we used to have it in the parlour for supper." — "Nothing more easy," said Mrs. White: "I put half a pound of rice, two quarts of skim-milk, and two ounces of brown sugar." — "Well," said the doctor, "and how many will this dine?" — "Seven or eight, sir." — "Very well, and what will it cost?" — "Why, sir, it did not cost you so much, because we baked it at home, and I used our own milk; but it will not cost above seven-pence to those who pay for both. Here, too, bread is saved."

"Pray, Sarah, let me put in a word," said Farmer White: "I advise my men to raise each a large bed of parsnips. They are very nourishing, and very profitable. Sixpenny worth of seed, well sowed, and trod in, will produce more meals than four sacks of potatoes; and what is material to you who have so little ground, it will not require more than an eighth part of the ground which the four sacks will take. Providence having contrived, by the very formation of this root, that it shall occupy but a very small space. Parsnips are very good the second day warmed in the frying-pan, and a little rasher of pork or bacon will give them a nice flavour."

Dr. Shepherd now said, "As a proof of the nourishing quality of parsnips, I was reading in a history book this very day, that the American Indians make a great part of their bread of parsnips, though Indian corn is so famous: it will make a little variety too."

better things of you." Here Betty Plane begged, with all humility, to put in a word. "Certainly," said the doctor, "we will listen to all modest complaints, and try to redress them." — "You are pleased to say, sir," said she, "that we might find much comfort from buying coarse bits of beef. And so we might, but you do not know, sir, that we could seldom get them, even when we had the money, and times were so bad." — "How so, Betty?" — "Sir, when we go to Butcher Jobbins, for a bit of shin, or any other lean piece, his answer is, 'You can't have it to-day. The cook at the great house has bespoke it for gravy, or the doctor's maid (begging your pardon, sir,) has just ordered it for soup.' Now, sir, if such kind gentlefolks were aware that this gravy and soup not only consume a great deal of meat, which, to be sure, those have a right to do who can pay for it; but that it takes away those coarse pieces which the poor would buy, if they bought at all. For, indeed, the rich have been very kind, and I don't know what we should have done without them."

"I thank you for the hint, Betty," said the doctor, "and I assure you I will have no more gravy soup. My garden will supply me with soups that are both wholesomer and better; and I will answer for my lady at the great house, that she will do the same. I hope this will become a general rule, and then we shall expect that butchers will favour you in the prices of the coarse pieces, if *we* who are rich buy nothing but the prime. In our gifts we shall prefer, as the farmer has told

you, those who keep steadily to their work. Such as come to the vestry for a loaf, and do not come to church for the sermon, we shall mark; and prefer those who come constantly whether there are any gifts or not. But there is one rule from which we never will depart. Those who have been seen aiding or abetting any riot, any attack on butchers, bakers, wheat-mows, mills, or millers, we will not relieve; but with the quiet, contented, hard-working man, I will share my last morsel of bread. I shall only add, though it has pleased God to send us this visitation as a punishment, yet we may convert this short trial into a lasting blessing, if we all turn over a new leaf. Prosperity had made most of us careless. The thoughtless profusion of some of the rich could only be exceeded by the idleness and bad management of some of the poor. Let us now at last adopt that good old maxim, *Every one mend one.* And may God add his blessing!"

The people now cheerfully departed with their rice, resolving, as many of them as could get milk, to put one of Mrs. White's receipts in practice, — and an excellent supper they had.

THE

HISTORY

OF

HESTER WILMOT,

BEING THE SECOND PART OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.*

HESTER WILMOT was born in the parish of Weston, of parents who maintained themselves by their labour: they were both of them ungodly; it is no wonder, therefore, they were unhappy. They lived badly together, and how could they do otherwise? for their tempers were very different, and they had no religion to smooth down this difference, or to teach them that they ought to bear with each other's faults. Rebecca Wilmot was a proof that people may have some right qualities, and yet be but bad characters, and utterly destitute of religion. She was clean, notable, and industrious. Now I know some folks fancy that the poor who have these qualities need have no other; but this is a sad mistake, as I am sure every page in the Bible would show; and it is a pity people do not consult it oftener. They direct their ploughing and sowing by the inform-

* See the preceding volume.

ation of the Almanack, why will they not consult the Bible for the direction of their hearts and lives? Rebecca was of a violent, ungovernable temper; and that very neatness which is in itself so pleasing, in her became a sin, for her affection to her husband and children was quite lost in an over-anxious desire to have her house reckoned the nicest in the parish. Rebecca was also a proof that a poor woman may be as vain as a rich one; for it was not so much the comfort of neatness, as the praise of neatness, which she coveted. A spot on her hearth, or a bit of rust on a brass candlestick, would throw her into a violent passion. Now it is very right to keep the hearth clean and the candlestick bright, but it is very wrong so to set one's affections on a hearth or a candlestick, as to make one's self unhappy if any trifling accident happens to them; and if Rebecca had been as careful to keep her heart without spot, or her life without blemish, as she was to keep her fire-irons free from either, she would have been held up in this history, not as a warning, but a pattern, and in that case her nicety would have come in for a part of the praise. It was no fault in Rebecca, but a merit, that her oak table was so bright you could almost see to put your cap on in it; but it was no merit but a fault, that when John, her husband, laid down his cup of beer upon it so as to leave a mark, she would fly out into so terrible a passion that all the children were forced to run to corners; now poor John, having no corner to run

to, ran to the alehouse, till that which was at first a refuge too soon became a pleasure.

Rebecca never wished her children to learn to read, because she said it would only serve to make them lazy, and she herself had done very well without it. She would keep poor Hester from church to stone the space under the chairs in fine patterns and flowers. I don't pretend to say there was any harm in this little decoration: it it looks pretty enough; and it is better to let the children do that than do nothing. But still these are not things to set one's heart upon; and, besides, Rebecca only did it as a trap for praise; for she was sulky and dissappointed if any ladies happened to call in and did not seem delighted with the flowers which she used to draw with a burnt stick on the white wash of the chimney corners. Besides, all this finery was often done on a Sunday; and there is a great deal of harm in doing even right things at a wrong time, or in wasting much time on things which are of no real use, or in doing any thing at all out of vanity. Now I beg that no lazy slattern of a wife will go and take any comfort in her dirt from what is here said against Rebecca's nicety; for I believe, that for one who makes her husband unhappy through neatness, twenty do so by dirt and laziness. All excesses are wrong, but the excess of a good quality is not so common as the excess of a bad one; and not being so obvious, perhaps, for that very reason requires more animadversion.

John Wilmot was not an ill-natured man, but

he had no fixed principle. Instead of setting himself to cure his wife's faults by mild reproof and a good example, he was driven by them into still greater faults himself. It is a common case with people who have no religion, when any cross accident befalls them, instead of trying to make the best of a bad matter, instead of considering their trouble as a trial sent from God to purify them, or instead of considering the faults of others as a punishment for their own sins, — instead of this, I say, what do they do but either sink down at once into despair, or else run for comfort into evil courses. Drinking is the common remedy for sorrow, if that can be called a remedy, the end of which is to destroy soul and body. John now began to spend all his leisure hours at the Bell. He used to be fond of his children; but when he could not come home in quiet and play with the little ones, while his wife dressed him a bit of hot supper, he grew in time not to come home at all. He who has once taken to drink can seldom be said to be guilty of one sin only; John's heart became hardened. His affection for his family was lost in self-indulgence. Patience and submission, on the part of his wife, might have won much upon a man of John's temper; but instead of trying to reclaim him, his wife seemed rather to delight in putting him as much in the wrong as she could, that she might be justified in her constant abuse of him. I doubt whether she would have been as much pleased with his reformation as she was with always talking of his faults, though I know it was

the opinion of the neighbours, that if she had taken as much pains to reform her husband by reforming her own temper, as she did to abuse him and expose him, her endeavours might have been blessed with success. Good Christians, who are trying to subdue their own faults, can hardly believe that the ungodly have a sort of savage satisfaction in trying, by indulgence of their own evil tempers, to lessen the happiness of those with whom they have to do. Need we look any further for a proof of our own corrupt nature, when we see mankind delight in sins which offer neither the temptation of profit nor the allurement of pleasure, such as plaguing, vexing, or abusing each other?

Hester was the eldest of their five children: she was a sharp, sensible girl, but at fourteen years old she could not tell a letter, nor had she ever been taught to bow her knee to Him who made her; for John's, or rather Rebecca's, house, had seldom the name of God pronounced in it, except to be blasphemed.

It was just about this time, if I mistake not, that Mrs. Jones set up her Sunday school, of which Mrs. Betty Crew was appointed mistress, as was related in the last volume. Mrs. Jones, finding that none of the Wilmots were sent to school, took a walk to Rebecca's house, and civilly told her she called to let her know that a school was opened, to which she desired her to send her children on the Sunday following, especially her eldest daughter, Hester. "Well," said Rebecca, "and what will you give her if I do?" — "Give her!" re-

plied Mrs. Jones; "that is rather a rude question, and asked in a rude manner: however, as a soft answer turneth away wrath, I assure you that I will give her the best of learning; I will teach her to *fear God, and keep his commandments.*" — "I would rather you would teach her to fear me, and to keep my house clean," said this wicked woman. "She shan't come, however, unless you will pay her for it." — "Pay her for it!" said the lady; "will it not be reward enough that she will be taught to read the word of God without any expense to you? For though many gifts, both of books and clothing, will be given the children, yet you are not to consider these gifts so much in the light of payment as an expression of good will in your benefactors." — "I say," interrupted Rebecca, "that Hester shan't go to school. Religion is of no use that I know of but to make people hate their own flesh and blood; and I see no good in learning but to make folks proud, and lazy, and dirty. I cannot tell a letter myself, and, though I say it, that should not say it, there is not a notabler woman in the parish." — "Pray," said Mrs. Jones, mildly, "do you think that young people will disobey their parents the more for being taught to fear God?" — "I don't think any thing about it," said Rebecca: "I shan't let her come, and there's the long and short of the matter. Hester has other fish to fry; but you may have some of these little ones if you will." — "No," said Mrs. Jones, "I will not; I have not set up a nursery, but a school. I am not at all this expense to take

crying babes out of the mother's way, but to instruct reasonable beings in the road to eternal life; and it ought to be a rule in all schools, not to take the troublesome *young* children, unless the mother will try to spare the *elder* ones, who are capable of learning." — "But," said Rebecca, "I have a young child, which Hester must nurse while I dress the Sunday dinner; and she must iron the rags, and scour the irons, and dig the potatoes, and fetch the water to boil them." — "As to nursing the child, that is indeed a necessary duty, and Hester ought to stay at home part of the day, to enable you to go to church; and families should relieve each other in this way: but as to all the rest, they are no reasons at all; for the irons need not be scoured so often, and the rags should be ironed, and the potatoes dug, and the water fetched, on the Saturday; and I can tell you that neither your minister here, nor your Judge hereafter, will accept of any such excuses."

All this while Hester staid behind, pale and trembling, lest her unkind mother should carry her point. She looked up at Mrs. Jones with so much love and gratitude as to win her affection, and this good lady went on trying to soften this harsh mother. At last Rebecca condescended to say, "Well, I don't know but I may let her come now and then when I can spare her, provided I find you make it worth her while." All this time she had never asked Mrs. Jones to sit down, nor had once bid her young children be quiet, though they were crying and squalling the whole time.

Rebecca fancied this rudeness was the only way she had of showing she thought herself to be as good as her guest, but Mrs. Jones never lost her temper. The moment she went out of the house, Rebecca called out loud enough for her to hear, and ordered Hester to get the stone and a bit of sand to scrub out the prints of that dirty woman's shoes. Hester, in high spirits, cheerfully obeyed, and rubbed out the stains so neatly, that her mother could not help lamenting that so handy a girl was going to be spoiled by being taught godliness, and learning, and such nonsense.

Mrs. Jones, who knew the world, told her agent, Mrs. Crew, that her grand difficulty would arise, not so much from the children as the parents. "These," said she, "are apt to fall into that sad mistake, that because their children are poor, and have little of this world's goods, the mothers must make it up to them in false indulgence. The children of the gentry are much more reproved and corrected for their faults, and bred up in far stricter discipline. He was a king who said, *Chasten thy son, and let not thy rod spare for his crying.* But do not lose your patience; the more vicious the children are, you must remember the more they stand in need of your instruction. When they are bad, comfort yourself with thinking how much worse they would have been but for you, and what a burden they would become to society if these evil tempers were to receive no check." The great thing which enabled Mrs. Crew to teach well was the deep insight she had got into the cor-

ruption of human nature. And I doubt if any one can make a thoroughly good teacher of religion and morals who wants this master-key to the heart. Others, indeed, may teach knowledge, decency, and good manners; but those, however valuable, are not Christianity. Mrs. Crew, who knew that out of the heart proceed lying, theft, and all that train of evils which begin to break out even in young children, applied her labours to correct this root of evil. But though a diligent, she was an humble teacher, well knowing that unless the grace of God blessed her labours, she should but labour in vain.

Hester Wilmot never failed to attend the school, whenever her perverse mother would give her leave; and her delight in learning was so great, that she would work early and late to gain a little time for her book. As she had a quick capacity, she learned soon to spell and read; and Mrs. Crew, observing her diligence, used to lend her a book to carry home, that she might pick up a little at odd times. It would be well if teachers would make this distinction. To give or lend books to those who take no delight in them is an useless expense; while it is kind and right to assist well-disposed young people with every help of this sort. Those who love books seldom hurt them; while the slothful, who hate learning, will wear out a book more in a week than the diligent will do in a year. Hester's way was to read over one question in her catechism, or one verse in her hymn-book, by fire-light, before she went to bed; this

she thought over in the night; and when she was dressing herself in the morning, she was glad to find she always knew a little more than she had done the morning before. It is not to be believed how much those people will be found to have gained at the end of the year, who are accustomed to work up all the little odd ends and remnants of leisure, who value time even more than money, and who are convinced that minutes are no more to be wasted than pence: nay, he who finds he has wasted a shilling, may by diligence hope to fetch it up again; but no repentance or industry can ever bring back one wasted hour. My good young reader, if ever *you* are tempted to waste an hour, go and ask a dying man what he would give for that hour which you are throwing away, and, according as he answers, so do you act.

As her mother hated the sight of a book, Hester was forced to learn out of sight. It was no disobedience to do this, as long as she wasted no part of that time which it was her duty to spend in useful labour. She would have thought it a sin to have left her work for her book; but she did not think it wrong to steal time from her sleep, and to be learning an hour before the rest of the family were awake. Hester would not neglect the washing-tub or the spinning-wheel, even to get on with her catechism; but she thought it fair to think over her questions while she was washing and spinning. In a few months she was able to read fluently in St. John's gospel, which is the easiest. But Mrs. Crew did not think it enough that her

children could read a chapter; she would make them understand it also. It is in a good degree owing to the want of religious knowledge in teachers, that there is so little religion in the world. Unless the Bible is laid open to the understanding, children may read from Genesis to the Revelation, without any other improvement than barely learning how to pronounce the words. Mrs. Crew found there was but one way to compel their attention: this was by obliging them to return back again to her the sense of what she had read to them; and this they might do in their own words, if they could not remember the words of Scripture. Those who had weak capacities would, to be sure, do this but very imperfectly; but even the weakest, if they were willing, would retain something. She so managed, that *saying the Catechism* was not merely an act of the memory, but of the understanding; for she had observed formerly, that those who had learned the Catechism in the common formal way, when they were children, had never understood it when they became men and women, and it remained in the memory without having made any impression on the mind. Thus this fine summary of the Christian religion is considered as little more than a form of words, the being able to repeat which is a qualification for being confirmed by the bishop, instead of being considered as really containing those grounds of Christian faith and practice, by which they are to be confirmed Christians.

Mrs. Crew used to say to Mrs. Jones, "Those

who teach the poor must indeed give line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, as they can receive it. So that teaching must be a great grievance to those who do not really make it a *labour of love.* I see so much levity, obstinacy, and ignorance, that it keeps my own forbearance in continual exercise, insomuch, that I trust that I am getting good myself while I am doing good to others. No one, madam, can know till they try, that after they have asked a poor untaught child the same question nineteen times, they must not lose their temper, but go on and ask it the twentieth. Now and then, when I am tempted to be impatient, I correct myself, by thinking over that active proof which our blessed Saviour requires of our love to him when he says, *Feed my lambs.*"

Hester Wilmot had never been bred to go to church; for her father and mother had never thought of going themselves, unless at a christening in their own family, or at a funeral of their neighbours; both which they considered merely as opportunities for good eating and drinking, and not as offices of religion.

As poor Hester had no comfort at home, it was the less wonder she delighted in her school, her Bible, and her church; for so great is God's goodness, that he is pleased to make religion a peculiar comfort to those who have no other comfort. The God whose name she had seldom heard but when it was *taken in vain,* was now revealed to her as a God of infinite

power, justice, and holiness. What she read in her Bible, and what she felt in her own heart, convinced her she was a sinner; and her catechism said the same. She was much distressed one day on thinking over this promise which she had just made (in answer to the question which fell to her lot), *To renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh.* I say she was distressed on finding that these were not merely certain words which she was bound to repeat, but certain conditions which she was bound to perform. She was sadly puzzled to know how this was to be done, till she met with these words in her Bible: *My grace is sufficient for thee.* But still she was at a loss to know how this grace was to be obtained. Happily Mr. Simpson preached on the next Sunday from this text, *Ask and ye shall have*, &c. In this sermon was explained to her the nature, the duty, and the efficacy of prayer. After this she opened her heart to Mrs. Crew, who taught her the great doctrines of Scripture, in a a serious but plain way. Hester's own heart led her to assent to that humbling doctrine of the Catechism, that *We are by nature born in sin*; and truly glad was she to be relieved by hearing of *That spiritual grace by which we have a new birth unto righteousness.* Thus her mind was no sooner humbled by one part, than it gained comfort from another. On the other hand, while she was rejoicing in *a lively hope in God's mercy through Christ*, her mistress put her in mind that that was

the only *true* repentance, *by which we forsake sin.* Thus the Catechism, explained by a pious teacher, was found to contain *all the articles of the Christian faith.*

Mrs. Jones greatly disapproved the practice of turning away the scholars because they were grown up. "Young people," said she "want to be warned at sixteen more than they did at six, and they are commonly turned adrift at the very age when they want most instruction; when dangers and temptations most beset them. They are exposed to more evil by the leisure of a Sunday evening than by the business of a whole week: but then religion must be made pleasant, and instruction must be carried on in a kind, and agreeable, and familiar way. If they once dislike the teacher they will soon get to dislike what is taught, so that a master or mistress is, in some measure, answerable for the future piety of young persons, inasmuch as that piety depends on their manner of making religion pleasant as well as profitable."

To attend Mrs. Jones's evening instructions was soon thought not a task but a holiday. In a few months it was reckoned a disadvantage to the character of any young person in the parish to know they did not attend the evening school. At first, indeed, many of them came only with a view to learn for amusement; but, by the blessing of God, they grew fond of instruction, and some of them became truly pious. Mrs. Jones spoke to them one Sunday evening as follows:—"My dear young women,

I rejoice at your improvement; but I rejoice with trembling. I have known young people set out well, who afterwards fell off. The heart is deceitful. Many like religious knowledge, who do not like the strictness of a religious life. I must, therefore, watch whether those who are diligent at church and school are diligent in their daily walk. Whether those who say they *believe* in God, really *obey* him. Whether they who profess to *love* Christ keep his *commandments*. Those who hear themselves commended for early piety may learn to rest satisfied with the praise of man. People may get a knack at religious phrases without being religious; they may even get to frequent places of worship as an amusement, in order to meet their friends, and may learn to delight in a sort of *spiritual gossip*, while religion has no power in their hearts. But I hope better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though I thus speak."

What became of Hester Wilmot, with some account of Mrs. Jones's May-day feast for her school, my readers shall be told next month.

PART II.

The New Gown.

Hester Wilmot, I am sorry to observe, had been by nature peevish and lazy: she would, when a child, now and then slight her work, and

when her mother was very unreasonable she was too apt to return her a saucy answer; but when she became acquainted with her own heart, and with the Scriptures, these evil tempers were, in a good measure, subdued; for she now learned to imitate, not her violent mother, but *him who was meek and lowly.* When she was scolded for doing ill, she prayed for grace to do better; and the only answer she made to her mother's charge, "that religion only served to make people lazy," was to strive to do twice as much work, in order to prove that it really made them diligent. The only thing in which she ventured to disobey her mother was, that when she ordered her to do week-days' work on a Sunday, Hester cried, and said she did not dare to disobey God; but to show that she did not wish to save her own labour she would do a double portion of work on the Saturday night, and rise two hours earlier on the Monday morning.

Once, when she had worked very hard, her mother told her she would treat her with a holiday the following Sabbath, and take her a fine walk to eat cakes and drink ale at Weston fair, which, though it was professed to be kept on the Monday, yet, to the disgrace of the village, always began on the Sunday evening.* Rebecca, who would on

* This practice is too common. Those fairs which profess to be kept on Monday commonly begin on the Sunday. It is much to be wished that magistrates would put a stop to it, as Mr. Edwards did at Weston, at the request of Mrs. Jones. There is another great evil worth the notice of justices. In

no account have wasted the Monday, which was a working day, in idleness and pleasure, thought she had a very good right to enjoy herself at the fair on the Sunday evening, as well as to take her children. Hester earnestly begged to be left at home, and her mother in a rage went without her. A wet walk, and more ale than she was used to drink, gave Rebecca a dangerous fever. During this illness, Hester, who would not follow her to a scene of dissolute mirth, attended her night and day, and denied herself necessaries that her sick mother might have comforts; and though she secretly prayed to God that this sickness might change her mother's heart, yet she never once reproached her, or put her in mind, that it was caught by indulging in a sinful pleasure.

Another Sunday night her father told Hester he thought she had now been at school long enough for him to have a little good of her learning, so he desired she would stay at home and read to him. Hester cheerfully ran and fetched her Testament. But John fell a laughing, called her a fool, and said, it would be time enough to read the Testament to him when he was going to die, but at present he must have something merry. So saying he gave her a song-book which he had picked up at the Bell. Hester having cast her

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many villages, during the fair, ale is sold at private houses, which have no license, to the great injury of sobriety and good morals.

eyes over it refused to read it, saying, she did not dare offend God by reading what would hurt her own soul. John called her a canting hypocrite, and said, he would put the Testament into the fire; for that there was not a more merry girl than she was before she became religious. Her mother for once took her part, not because she thought her daughter in the right, but because she was glad of any pretence to show her husband was in the wrong; though she herself would have abused Hester for the same thing if John had taken her part. John, with a shocking oath, abused them both, and went off in a violent passion. Hester, instead of saying one undutiful word against her father, took up a Psalter in order to teach her little sisters; but Rebecca was so provoked at her for not joining her in her abuse of her husband, that she changed her humour, said John was in the right, and Hester a perverse hypocrite, who only made religion a pretence for being undutiful to her parents. Hester bore all in silence, and committed her cause to him *who judgeth righteously*. It would have been a great comfort to her if she had dared to go to Mrs. Crew, and to have joined in the religious exercises of the evening at school. But her mother refused to let her, saying, it would only harden her heart in mischief. Hester said not a word; but after having put the little ones to bed, and heard them say their prayers out of sight, she went and sat down in her own little loft, and said to herself, "It would be pleasant to me to have taught my little

sisters to read: I thought it was my duty; for David has said, *Come ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord.* It would have been still more pleasant to have passed the evening at school, because I am still ignorant, and fitter to learn than to teach; but I cannot do either without flying in the face of my mother: God sees fit to-night to change my pleasant duties into a painful trial. I give up my will, and I submit to the will of my father; but when he orders me to commit a known sin, then I dare not do it, because in so doing I must disobey my Father which is in heaven."

Now it so fell out, that this dispute happened on the very Sunday next before Mrs. Jones's yearly feast. On May-day all the school attended her to church, each in a stuff gown of their own earning, and a cap and white apron of her giving. After church there was an examination made into the learning and behaviour of the scholars: those who were most perfect in their chapters, and who brought the best character for industry, humility, and sobriety, received a Bible, or some other good book.

Now Hester had been a whole year hoarding up her little savings, in order to be ready with a new gown on the May-day feast. She had never got less than two shillings a-week by her spinning, besides working for the family, and earning a trifle by odd jobs. This money she faithfully carried to her mother every Saturday night, keeping back, by consent, only two-pence a week towards the gown.

The sum was complete, the pattern had long been settled, and Hester had only on the Monday morning to go to the shop, pay her money, and bring home her gown to be made. Her mother happened to go out that morning early to iron in a gentleman's family, where she usually staid a day or two, and Hester was busy putting the house in order before she went to the shop.

On that very Monday there was to be a meeting at the Bell of all the idle fellows in the parish; John Wilmot, of course, was to be there. Indeed, he had accepted a challenge of the blacksmith to a batch at all-fours. The blacksmith was flush of money; John thought himself the best player; — and, that he might make sure of winning, he resolved to keep himself sober, which he knew was more than the other would do. John was so used to go upon tick for ale, that he got to the door of the Bell before he recollected that he could not keep his word with the gambler without money, and he had not a penny in his pocket, so he sullenly turned homewards. He dared not apply to his wife, as he knew he should be more likely to get a scratched face than a sixpence from her; but he knew that Hester had received two shillings for her last week's spinning on Saturday, and perhaps she might not yet have given it to her mother. Of the hoarded sum he knew nothing. He asked her if she could lend him half-a-crown, and he would pay her next day. Hester, pleased to see him in good humour, after what had passed the night before, ran up and fetched down her little box, and in the

joy of her heart that he now desired something she *could* comply with, without wounding her conscience, cheerfully poured out her whole little stock upon the table. John was in raptures at the sight of three half-crowns and a sixpence, and eagerly seized it, box and all, together with a few hoarded halfpence at the bottom, though he had only asked to borrow half-a-crown. None but one whose heart was hardened by a long course of drunkenness could have taken away the whole, and for such a purpose. He told her she should certainly have it again next morning, and, indeed, intended to pay it, not doubting but he should double the sum. But John over-rated his own skill, or luck, for he lost every farthing to the blacksmith, and sneaked home before midnight, and quietly walked up to bed. He was quite sober, which Hester thought a good sign. Next morning she asked him, in a very humble way, for the money, which she said she would not have done, but that if the gown was not bought directly it would not be ready in time for the feast. John's conscience had troubled him a little for what he had done; for when he was not drunk he was not ill natured, and he stammered out a broken excuse, but owned he had lost the money, and had not a farthing left. The moment Hester saw him mild and kind, her heart was softened, and she begged him not to vex; adding, that she would be contented never to have a new gown as long as she lived, if she could have the comfort of always seeing him come home as sober as he was last night. For Hester did not

know that he had refrained from getting drunk, only that he might gamble with a better chance of success; and that when a gamester keeps himself sober, it is not that he may practise a virtue, but that he may commit a worse crime. "I am, indeed, sorry for what I have done," said he: "you cannot go to the feast, and what will Madam Jones say?" — "Yes, but I can," said Hester; "for God looks not at the gown, but at the heart, and I am sure he sees mine full of gratitude at hearing you talk so kindly; and if I thought my dear father would change his present evil courses, I should be the happiest girl at the feast to-morrow." John walked away mournfully, and said to himself, — "Surely there must be something in religion, since it can thus change the heart. Hester was once a pert girl, and now she is as mild as a lamb. She was once an indolent girl, and now she is up with the lark. She was a vain girl, and would do any thing for a new riband; and now she is contented to go in rags to a feast at which every one else will have a new gown. She deprived herself of her gown to give me the money; and yet this very girl, so dutiful in some things, would submit to be turned out of doors, rather than read a loose book at my command, or break the Sabbath. I do not understand this; there must be some mystery in it." — All this he said as he was going to work. In the evening he did not go to the Bell: whether it was owing to his new thoughts, or to his not having a penny in his pocket, I will not take upon me posi-

tively to say; but I believe it was a little of one, and a little of the other.

As the pattern of the intended gown had long been settled in the family, and as Hester had the money by her, it was looked on as good as bought, so that she was trusted to get it brought home, and made in her mother's absence. Indeed, so little did Rebecca care about the school, that she would not have cared any thing about the gown, if her vanity had not made her wish that her daughter should be the best drest of any girl at the feast. Being from home, as was said before, she knew nothing of the diappointment. On May-day morning, Hester, instead of keeping from the feast, because she had not a new gown, or meanly inventing any excuse for wearing an old one, dressed herself out as neatly as she could in her poor old things, and went to join the school in order to go to church. Whether Hester had formerly indulged a little pride of heart, and talked of this gown rather too much, I am not quite sure; certain it is, there was a great hue and cry made at seeing Hester Wilmot, the neatest girl, the most industrious girl in the school, come to the May-day feast in an old stuff gown, when every other girl was so creditably drest. Indeed, I am sorry to say, there were two or three much too smart for their station, and who had dizened themselves out in very improper finery, which Mrs. Jones made them take off before her. "I mean this feast," said she, "as a reward of industry and piety, and not as a trial of skill who can be finest, and outvie

the rest in show. If I do not take care, my feast will become an encouragement, not to virtue, but to vanity. I am so great a friend to decency of apparel, that I even like to see you deny your appetites, that you may be able to come decently dressed to the house of God. To encourage you to do this, I like to set apart this one day of innocent pleasure, against which you may be preparing all the year, by laying aside something every week towards buying a gown out of your little savings. But, let me tell you, that meekness and an humble spirit is of more value in the sight of God and good men than the gaiest cotton gown, or the brightest pink riband in the parish."

Mrs. Jones, for all this, was as much surprised as the rest at Hester's mean garb: but such is the power of a good character, that she gave her credit for a right intention, especially as she knew the unhappy state of her family. For it was Mrs. Jones's way (and it is not a bad way) always to wait, and enquire into the truth, before she condemned any person of good character, though appearances were against them. "As we cannot judge of people's motives," said she, "we may, from ignorance, often condemn their best actions, and approve of their worst. It will be always time enough to judge unfavourably; and let us give others credit as long as we can, and then we, in our turn, may expect a favourable judgment from others, and remember who has said, *Judge not, that ye be not judged.*"

Hester was no more proud of what she had done

for her father than she was humbled by the meanness of her garb; and notwithstanding Betty Stiles, one of the girls whose finery had been taken away, sneered at her, Hester never offered to clear herself by exposing her father, though she thought it right secretly to inform Mrs. Jones of what had passed. When the examination of the girls began, Betty Stiles was asked some questions on the fourth and fifth commandments which she answered very well. Hester was asked nearly the same questions, and, though she answered them no better than Betty had done, they were all surprised to see Mrs. Jones rise up, and give a handsome Bible to Hester, while she gave nothing to Betty. This girl cried out rather pertly, "Madam, it is very hard that I have no book: I was as perfect as Hester." —"I have often told you," said Mrs. Jones, "that religion is not a thing of the tongue but of the heart. That girl gives me the best proof that she has learned the fourth commandment to good purpose, who persists in keeping holy the Sabbath-day, though commanded to break it by a parent whom she loves. And that girl best proves that she keeps the fifth, who gives up her own comfort, and clothing, and credit, *to honour and obey her father and mother*, even though they are not such as she could wish. Betty Stiles, though she could answer the questions so readily, went abroad last Sunday when she should have been at school, and refused to nurse her sick mother when she could not help herself. Is this having learnt these two commandments to any good purpose?"

Farmer Hoskins, who stood by, whispered Mrs. Jones, "Well, Madam, now you have convinced even me of the benefit of religious instruction; now I see there is a meaning to it. I thought it was in at one ear and out at the other, and that a song was as well as a psalm; but now I have found the proof of the pudding is in the eating. I see your scholars must *do* what they *hear*, and *obey* what they *learn*. Why, at this rate, they will all be the better servants for being really godly, and so I will add a pudding to next year's feast."

The pleasure Hester felt in receiving a new Bible made her forget that she had on an old gown. She walked to church in a thankful frame; but how great was her joy, when she saw, among a number of working men, her own father going into church! As she passed by him, she cast on him a look of so much joy and affection, that it brought tears into his eyes, especially when he compared her mean dress with that of the other girls, and thought who had been the cause of it. John, who had not been at church for some years, was deeply struck with the service. The confession with which it opens went to his heart. He felt, for the first time, that he was a *miserable sinner, and that there was no health in him.* He now felt compunction for sin in general, though it was only his ill behaviour to his daughter which had brought him to church. The sermon was such as served to strengthen the impression which the prayers had made; and when it was over, instead of joining the ringers, (for the belfry was the only part of the

church John liked, because it usually led to the ale-house,) he quietly walked back to his work. It was, indeed, the best day's work he ever made. He could not get out of his head the whole day the first words he heard at church: *When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness, and doth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.* At night, instead of going to the Bell, he went home, intending to ask Hester to forgive him; but as soon as he got to the door, he heard Rebecca scolding his daughter for having brought such a disgrace on the family as to be seen in that old rag of a gown, and insisted on knowing what she had done with the money. Hester tried to keep the secret, but her mother declared she would turn her out of doors if she did not tell the truth. Hester was at last forced to confess she had given it to her father. Unfortunately for poor John, it was at this very moment that he opened the door. The mother now divided her fury between her guilty husband and her innocent child, till from words she fell to blows. John defended his daughter, and received some of the strokes intended for the poor girl. This turbulent scene partly put John's good resolutions to flight, though the patience of Hester did him almost as much good as the sermon he had heard. At length the poor girl escaped up stairs, not a little bruised, and a scene of much violence passed between John and Rebecca. She declared she would not sit down to supper with such a brute, and set off to a neighbour's house, that she might have the pleasure of

abusing him the longer. John, whose mind was much disturbed, went up stairs without his supper. As he was passing by Hester's little room he heard her voice, and as he concluded she was venting bitter complaints against her unnatural parents, he stopped to listen, resolving to go in and comfort her. He stopped at the door, for, by the light of the moon, he saw her kneeling by her bedside, and praying so earnestly that she did not hear him. As he made sure she could be praying for nothing but his death, what was his surprise to hear these words: "O Lord, have mercy upon my dear father and mother; teach me to love them, to pray for them, and do them good; make me more dutiful and more patient, that, adorning the doctrine of God, my Saviour, I may recommend his holy religion, and my dear parents may be brought to love and fear thee, through Jesus Christ."

Poor John, who would never have been hard-hearted if he had not been a drunkard, could not stand this; he fell down on his knees, embraced his child, and begged her to teach him how to pray. He prayed himself as well as he could, and though he did not know what words to use, yet his heart was melted; he owned he was a sinner, and begged Hester to fetch the Prayer-book, and read over the confession with which he had been so struck at church. This was the pleasantest order she had ever obeyed. Seeing him deeply affected with a sense of sin, she pointed out to him the Saviour of sinners; and in this manner she passed some hours with her father, which were the happiest of her

life; such a night was worth a hundred cotton, or even silk gowns. In the course of the week Hester read over the confession, and some other prayers, to her father so often, that he got them by heart, and repeated them while he was at work. She next taught him the fifty-first psalm. At length he took courage to kneel down and pray before he went to bed. From that time he bore his wife's ill humour much better than he had ever done, and as he knew her to be neat, and notable, and saving, he began to think, that if her temper was not quite so bad, his home might still become as pleasant a place to him as ever the Bell had been: but unless she became more tractable, he did not know what to do with his long evenings after the little ones were in bed, for he began, once more, to delight in playing with them. Hester proposed that she herself should teach him to read an hour every night, and he consented. Rebecca began to storm, from the mere trick she had got of storming: but finding that he now brought home all his earnings, and that she got both his money and his company (for she had once loved him), she began to reconcile herself to this new way of life. In a few months John could read a psalm. In learning to read it he also got it by heart, and this proved a little store for private devotion; and while he was mowing or reaping he could call to mind a text to cheer his labour. He now went constantly to church, and often dropped in at the school on a Sunday evening to hear their prayers. He expressed so much pleasure at this, that one day Hester ventured to ask him if they

should set up family prayer at home? John said he should like it mightily; but as he could not yet read quite well enough, he desired Hester to try to get a proper book, and begin next Sunday night. Hester had bought, of a pious hawker, for three halfpence *, the Book of Prayers, printed for the Cheap Repository, and knew she should there find something suitable.

When Hester read the exhortation at the beginning of this little book, her mother, who sat in the corner, and pretended to be asleep, was so much struck that she could not find a word to say against it. For a few nights, indeed, she continued to sit still, or pretended to rock the young child while her husband and daughter were kneeling at their prayers. She expected John would have scolded her for this; and so perverse was her temper, that she was disappointed at his finding no fault with her. Seeing at last that he was very patient, and that though he prayed fervently himself, he suffered her to do as she liked, she lost the spirit of opposition for want of something to provoke it. As her pride began to be subdued, some little disposition to piety was awakened in her heart. By degrees she slid down on her knees, though at first it was behind the cradle, or the clock, or in some corner, where she thought they would not see her. Hester rejoiced even in this outward change in her mother,

* These prayers may be had also divided into two parts, one fit for private persons, the other for families, price one halfpenny.

and prayed that God would at last be pleased to touch her heart as he had done that of her father.

As John now spent no idle money, he had saved up a trifle by working over-hours; this he kindly offered to Hester to make up for the loss of her gown. Instead of accepting it, Hester told him, that as she herself was young and healthy, she should soon be able to clothe herself out of her own savings, and begged him to make her mother a present of this gown, which he did. It had been a maxim of Rebecca, that it was better not to go to church at all than go in an old gown. She had, however, so far conquered this evil notion, that she had lately gone pretty often. This kindness of the gown touched her not a little; and the first Sunday she put it on, Mr. Edwards happened to preach from this text, *God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.* This sermon so affected Rebecca that she never once thought she had her new gown on, till she came to take it off when she went to bed, and that very night, instead of skulking behind, she knelt down by her husband, and joined in prayer with much fervour.

There was one thing sunk deep in Rebecca's mind; she had observed, that since her husband had grown religious he had been so careful not to give her any offence, that he was become scrupulously clean: took off his dirty shoes before he sat down, and was very cautious not to spill a drop of beer on her shining table. Now it was rather remarkable, that as John grew more neat, Rebecca grew more indifferent to neatness. But both these

changes arose from the same cause, the growth of religion in their hearts. John grew cleanly from the fear of giving pain to his wife, while Rebecca grew indifferent from having discovered the sin and folly of an over-anxious care about trifles. When the heart is once given up to God, such vanities in a good degree die of themselves.

Hester continues to grow in grace, and in knowledge. Last Christmas-day she was appointed an under-teacher in the school; and many people think that some years hence, if any thing should happen to Mrs. Crew, Hester may be promoted to be head-mistress.

THE

GRAND ASSIZES;

OR

GENERAL GAOL DELIVERY,

AN ALLEGORY.

THERE was in a certain country a great King, who was also a Judge. He was very merciful, but he was also very just; for he used to say, that justice was the foundation of all goodness, and that indiscriminate and misapplied mercy was in fact injustice. His subjects were apt enough, in a general way, to extol his merciful temper, and especially those subjects who were always committing crimes which made them particularly liable to be punished by his justice. This last quality they constantly kept out of sight, till they had cheated themselves into a notion that he was too good to punish at all.

Now it had happened a long time before, that this whole people had broken their allegiance, and had forfeited the King's favour, and had also fallen from a very prosperous state in which he had originally placed them, having one and all

become bankrupts. But when they were over head and ears in debt, and had nothing to pay, the King's Son most generously took the whole burden of their debts on himself; and, in short, it was proposed that all their affairs should be settled, and their very crimes forgiven (for they were criminals as well as debtors), provided only they would show themselves sincerely sorry for what they had done themselves, and be thankful for what had been done for them. I should, however, remark, that a Book was also given them, in which a true and faithful account of their own rebellion was written; and of the manner of obtaining the King's pardon, together with a variety of directions for their conduct in the time to come; and in this Book it was particularly mentioned, that after having lived a certain number of years in a remote part of the same King's country, yet still under his eye and jurisdiction, there should be a *Grand Assizes*, when every one was to be publicly tried for his past behaviour; and after this trial was over, certain heavy punishments were to be inflicted on those who should have still persisted in their rebellion, and certain high premiums were to be bestowed as a gracious reward upon the penitent and obedient.

It may be proper here to notice, that this King's court differed in some respects from our courts of justice, being indeed a sort of court of appeal, to which questions were carried after they had been imperfectly decided in the common courts. And although with us all criminals are tried (and a

most excellent mode of trial it is) by a jury of their peers, yet in this King's country the mode was very different; for since every one of the people had been in a certain sense criminals, the King did not think it fair to make them judges also. It would, indeed, have been impossible to follow in all respects the customs which prevail with us, for the crimes with which men are charged in our courts are mere *overt acts*, as the lawyers call them, that is, acts which regard the outward behaviour; such as the acts of striking, maiming, stealing, and so forth. But in this King's court it was not merely outward sins, but sins of the heart also which were to be punished. Many a crime, therefore, which was never heard of in the Court of King's Bench or at the Old Bailey, and which, indeed, could not be cognisable by these courts, was here to be brought to light, and was reserved for this great day. Among these were pride, and oppression, and envy, and malice, and revenge, and covetousness, and secret vanity of mind, and evil thoughts of all sorts, and all sinful wishes and desires. When covetousness, indeed, put men on committing robbery, or when malice drove them to an act of murder, then the common courts immediately judged the criminal, without waiting for these Great Assizes; nevertheless, since even a thief and murderer would now and then escape in the common courts, for want of evidence, or through some fault or other of the judge or jury, the escape was of little moment to the poor criminal, for he was sure to be tried again

by this great King; and even though the man should have been punished in some sense before, yet he had now a further and more lasting punishment to fear, unless, indeed, he was one of those who had obtained, by the means I before spoke of, this great King's pardon. The *sins of the heart*, however, were by far the most numerous sort of sins, which were to come before this grand tribunal; and these were to be judged by this great King in person, and by none but himself; because he alone possessed a certain power of getting at all secrets.

I once heard of a certain king of Sicily, who built a whispering gallery in the form of an ear, through which he could hear every word his rebellious subjects uttered, though spoken ever so low. But this secret of the king of Sicily was nothing to what this great King possessed; for He had the power of knowing every thought which was conceived in the mind, though it never broke out into words, or proceeded to actions.

Now you may be ready to think, perhaps, that these people were worse off than any others, because they were to be examined so closely, and judged so strictly. Far from it: the King was too just to expect bricks without giving them straw; he gave them, therefore, every help that they needed. He gave them a Book of directions, as I before observed; and, because they were naturally short-sighted, he supplied them with a glass for reading it, and thus the most dim-sighted might see, if they did not wilfully shut their eyes. But though the

King *invited* them to open their eyes, he did not *compel* them; and many remained stone-blind all their lives, with the Book in their hand, because they would not use the glass, nor take the proper means for reading and understanding all that was written for them. The humble and sincere learned in time to see even that part of the Book which was least plainly written; and it was observed that the ability to understand it depended more on the heart than the head; an evil disposition blinded the sight, while humility operated like an eye-salve.

Now it happened that those who had been so lucky as to escape the punishment of the lower courts took it into their heads that they were all very good sort of people, and, of course, very safe from any danger at this *Great Assize*. This grand intended trial, indeed, had been talked of so much, and put off so long, (for it had seemed long, at least, to these short-sighted people,) that many persuaded themselves it would never take place at all; and far the greater part were living away, therefore, without ever thinking about it: they went on just as if nothing at all had been done for their benefit; and as if they had no King to please, no King's Son to be thankful to, no Book to guide themselves by, and as if the Assizes were never to come about.

But with this King *a thousand years were as one day; for he was not slack concerning his promises, as some men count slackness.* — So at length the solemn period approached. Still, however, the people did not prepare for the solemnity; or, rather, they prepared for it much as some of the people in our pro-

vincial towns are apt to prepare for the annual assize times, —I mean, by balls and feastings; and they saw their own trial come on with as little concern as is felt by the people in our streets, when they see the judge's procession enter the town: they indeed comfort themselves that it is only those in the prisons who are guilty.

But when, at last, the day came, and every man found that he was to be judged for himself; and that, somehow or other, all his secrets were brought out, and that there was now no escape, not even a short reprieve, things began to take a more serious turn. Some of the worst of the criminals were got together, debating in an outer court of the grand hall; and there they passed their time, not in compunction and tears, not in comparing their lives with what was required in that Book which had been given them, but they derived a fallacious hope by comparing themselves with such as had been still more notorious offenders.

One who had grown wealthy by rapine and oppression, but had contrived to keep within the letter of the law, insulted a poor fellow as a thief, because he had stolen a loaf of bread. "You were far wickeder than I was," said a citizen to his apprentice, "for you drank and swore at the ale-house every Sunday night."—"Yes," said the poor fellow; "but it was your fault that I did so; for you took no care of my soul, but spent all your Sabbaths in jaunting abroad, or in rioting at home. I might have learnt, but there was no one to teach me: I might have followed a good example, but I saw

only bad ones. I sinned against less light than you did." A drunken journeyman, who had spent all his wages on gin, rejoiced that he had not spent a great estate in bribery at elections, as the lord of his manor had done; while a perjured elector boasted that he was no drunkard, like the journeyman; and the member himself took comfort that he had never *received* the bribes which he had not been ashamed to *give*.

I have not room to describe the awful pomp of the court, nor the terrible sounding of the trumpet which attended the Judge's entrance, nor the sitting of the Judge, nor the opening of the books, nor the crowding of the millions who stood before him. I shall pass over the multitudes who were tried and condemned to dungeons and chains, and eternal fire, and to perpetual banishment from the presence of the King, which always seemed to be the saddest part of the sentence. I shall only notice, further, a few who brought some plea of merit, and claimed a right to be rewarded by the King, and even deceived themselves so far as to think that his own Book of laws would be their justification.

A thoughtless spendthrift advanced without any contrition, and said that he had lived handsomely, and had hated the covetous whom God abhorreth; that he trusted in that passage of the Book which said, that *covetousness was idolatry;* and that he therefore hoped for a favourable sentence. Now it proved that this man had not only avoided covetousness, but that he had even left his wife and children in want, through his excessive prodigality.

The Judge, therefore, immediately pointed to that place in the book where it is written, *He that provideth not for his household is worse than an infidel. He that liveth in pleasure is dead while he liveth.* — "Thou," said he, "*in thy lifetime, receivedst thy good things, and now thou must be tormented.*" — Then a miser, whom hunger and hoarding had worn to skin and bone, crept forward, and praised the sentence passed on this extravagant youth; "and surely," said he, "since he is condemned, I am the man that may make some plea to favour: I was never idle or drunk; I kept my body in subjection; I have been so self-denying that I am certainly a saint; I have loved neither father nor mother, nor wife nor children to excess: in all this I have obeyed the book of the law." — Then the Judge said: "But where are thy works of mercy and thy labours of love? — See that family which perished in thy sight last hard winter, while thy barns were overflowing: that poor family were my representatives; yet they were hungry, and thou gavest them no meat. —*Go to now, thou rich man, weep and howl for the miseries that are come upon you. Your gold and your silver is cankered, and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire.*"

Then came up one with a most self-sufficient air. He walked up boldly, having in one hand the plan of an hospital which he had built, and in the other the drawing of a statue, which was erected for him in the country that he had just left; and on his forehead appeared, in gold letters, the list of all the

public charities to which he had subscribed. He seemed to take great pleasure in the condemnation of the miser, and said, "*Lord, when saw I thee hungry and fed thee not, or in prison and visited thee not? I have visited the fatherless and widow in their affliction.*" Here the Judge cut him short, by saying, "True, thou didst visit the fatherless, but didst thou fulfil equally that other part of my command, *to keep thyself unspotted from the world?* — No; thou wast conformed to the world in many of its sinful customs, *thou didst follow a multitude to do evil; thou didst love the world, and the things of the world;* and the motive to all thy charities was not a regard to me but to thy own credit with thy fellow-men. Thou hast done every thing for the sake of reputation, and now thou art vainly trusting in thy deceitful works, instead of putting all thy trust in my Son, who has offered himself to be a surety for thee. Where has been that humility and gratitude to him which was required of thee? No, thou wouldst be thine own surety; thou hast trusted in thyself; thou hast made thy boast of thine own goodness; thou hast sought after and thou hast enjoyed the praise of men, and verily I say unto thee, *thou hast had thy reward.*"

A poor diseased blind cripple, who came from the very hospital which this great man had built, then fell prostrate on his face, crying out, *Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner!* on which the Judge, to the surprise of all, said, "*Well done, good and faithful servant.*" The poor man replied, "Lord, I have done nothing!"—"But thou hast *suffered*

well," said the Judge; "thou hast been an example of patience and meekness; and though thou hast but few talents, yet thou hast well improved those few. Thou hadst time; this thou didst spend in the humble duties of thy station, and also in earnest prayer; thou didst pray even for that proud founder of thine hospital, who never prayed for himself. Thou wast, indeed, blind and lame; but it is nowhere said, My son, give me thy feet, or thine eyes, but *Give me thy heart;* and even the few faculties I did grant thee were employed to my glory: with thine ears thou didst listen to my word, with thy tongue thou didst show forth my praise. *Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*"

There were several who came forward and boasted of some single and particular virtue, in which they had been supposed to excel. One talked of his generosity, another of his courage, and a third of his fortitude; but it proved, on a close examination, that some of those supposed virtues were merely the effect of a particular constitution of body; that others proceeded from a false motive, and that not a few of them were actual vices, since they were carried to excess; and under the pretence of fulfilling one duty, some other duty was lost sight of: in short, these partial virtues were none of them practised in obedience to the will of the King, but merely to please the person's own humour, or to gain praise, and they would not therefore stand this day's trial; for *he that had kept the whole law, and yet had wilfully and habitually*

offended in any one point, was declared guilty of breaking the whole.

At this moment a sort of thick scales fell from the eyes of the multitude; they could now no longer take comfort, as they had done for so many years, by measuring their neighbours' conduct against their own. Each at once saw himself in his true light, and found, alas! when it was too late, that he should have made the BOOK which had been given him his rule of practice before, since it now proved to be the rule by which he was to be judged. Nay, every one now thought himself even worse than his neighbour; because, while he only *saw* and *heard* of the guilt of others, he *felt* his own in all its aggravated horror.

To complete their confusion, they were compelled to acknowledge the justice of the Judge who condemned them, and also to approve the favourable sentence by which thousands of other criminals had not only their lives saved, but were made happy and glorious beyond all imagination; not for any great merits which they had to produce, but in consequence of their sincere repentance, and their humble acceptance of the pardon offered to them by the King's Son. One thing was remarkable, that while most of those who were condemned never expected condemnation, but even claimed a reward for their supposed innocence or goodness, all who were really rewarded and forgiven were sensible that they owed their pardon to a mere act of grace, and they cried out with one voice, *Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name be the praise!!!*

THE

SERVANT MAN TURNED SOLDIER;

OR,

THE FAIR WEATHER CHRISTIAN,

AN ALLEGORY.

WILLIAM was a lively young servant, who lived in a *great but very irregular family.* His place was, on the whole, agreeable to him, and suited to his gay thoughtless temper. He found a plentiful table and a good cellar. There was, indeed, a good deal of work to be done, though it was performed with much disorder and confusion. The family, in the main, were not unkind to him, though they often contradicted and crossed him; especially when things went ill with themselves. This William never much liked; for he was always fond of having his own way. There was a merry, or rather a noisy and riotous, servants' hall: for disorder and quarrels are indeed the usual effects of plenty and unrestrained indulgence. The men were smart, but idle; the maids were showy, but licentious; and all did pretty much as they liked for a time, but the time was commonly short. The wages

were reckoned high, but they were seldom paid; and it was even said by sober people that the family was insolvent, and never fulfilled any of their flattering engagements or their most positive promises. But still, notwithstanding their real poverty, things went on with just the same thoughtlessness and splendour, and neither masters nor servants looked beyond the jollity of the present hour.

In this unruly family there was little church-going, and still less praying at home. They pretended, indeed, in a general way, to believe in the Bible; but it was only an outward profession: few of them read it at all, and even of those who did read it still fewer were governed by it. There was, indeed, a Bible lying on the table in the great hall, which was kept for the purpose of administering an oath, but was seldom used on any other occasion; and some of the heads of the family were of opinion that this was its only real use, as it might serve to keep the lower parts of it in order.

William, who was fond of novelty and pleasure, was apt to be negligent of the duties of the house. He used to stay out on his errands, and one of his favourite amusements was going to the parade to see the soldiers exercise. He saw with envy how smartly they were dressed, listened with rapture to the music, and fancied that a soldier had nothing to do but to walk to and fro in a certain regular order, to go through a little easy exercise; in short, to live without fighting, fatigue, or danger.

"O," said he, whenever he was affronted at

home, "what a fine thing it must be to be a soldier! to be so well dressed, to have nothing to do but to move to the pleasant sound of fife and drum, and to have so many people come to look at one and admire one: — O it must be a fine thing to be a soldier!"

Yet when the vexation of the moment was over, he found so much ease and diversion in the great family, it so suited his low taste and sensual appetites, that he thought no more of the matter. He forgot the glories of a soldier, and eagerly returned to all the mean gratifications of the kitchen. His evil habits were but little attended to by those with whom he lived: his faults, among which were lying and swearing, were not often corrected by the family, who had little objection to those sins, which only offended God, and did not much affect their own interest or property. And except that William was obliged to work rather more than he liked, he found little, while he was young and healthy, that was very disagreeable in this service. So he went on, still thinking, however, when things went a little cross, what a fine thing it was to be a soldier! At last, one day as he was waiting at dinner, he had the misfortune to let fall a china dish, and broke it all to pieces. It was a curious dish, much valued by the family, as they pretended: this family were indeed apt to set a false fantastic value on things, and not to estimate them by their real worth. The heads of the family, who had generally been rather patient and good humoured with William, as I said before,

for those vices which, though offensive to God, did not touch their own pocket, now flew out into a violent passion with him, called him a thousand hard names, and even threatened to horsewhip him for his shameful negligence.

William, in a great fright, for he was a sad coward at bottom, ran directly out of the house to avoid the threatened punishment; and happening just at that very time to pass by the parade where the soldiers chanced to be then exercising, his resolution was taken in a moment. He instantly determined to be no more a slave, as he called it; he would return no more to be subject to the humours of a tyrannical family; no, he was resolved to be free, or at least, if he must serve, he would serve no master but the King.

William, who had now and then happened to hear from the accidental talk of the soldiers, that those who served the great family he had lived with were slaves to their tyranny and vices, had also heard in the same casual manner, that the service of the King was *perfect freedom*. Now he had taken it into his head to hope that this might be a freedom to do evil, or at least to do nothing, so he thought it was the only place in the world to suit him.

A fine likely young man as William was had no great difficulty to get enlisted. The few forms were soon settled: he received the bounty money as eagerly as it was offered, took the oaths of allegiance, was joined to the regiment, and heartily welcomed by his new comrades. He was the

happiest fellow alive. All was smooth and calm. The day happened to be very fine, and therefore William always reckoned upon a fine day. The scene was gay and lively, the music cheerful; he found the exercise very easy, and he thought there was little more expected from him.

He soon began to flourish away in his talk; and when he met with any one of his old fellow-servants, he fell a prating about marches and countermarches, and blockades, and battles, and sieges, and blood, and death, and triumphs, and victories, all at random; for these were words and phrases he had picked up, without at all understanding what he said. He had no knowledge, and therefore he had no modesty; he had no experience, and therefore he had no fears.

All seemed to go on swimmingly, for he had as yet no trial. He began to think with triumph what a mean life he had escaped from in the old quarrelsome family, and what a happy, honourable life he should have in the army. O, there was no life like the life of a soldier!

In a short time, however, war broke out: his regiment was one of the first which was called out to actual and hard service. As William was the most raw of all the recruits, he was the first to murmur at the difficulties and hardships, the cold and hunger, the fatigue and danger, of being a soldier. O, what watchings, and perils, and trials, and hardships, and difficulties he now thought attended a military life! "Surely," said he, "I could

never have suspected all this misery when I used to see the men on the parade in our town."

He now found, when it was too late, that all the field-days he used to attend, all the evolutions and exercises which he had observed the soldiers to go through in the calm times of peace and safety, were only meant to fit, train, and qualify them for the actual service which they were now sent out to perform by the command of the King.

The truth is, William often complained when there was no real hardship to complain of; for the common troubles of life fell out pretty much alike to the great family which William had left, and to the soldiers in the King's army. But the spirit of obedience, discipline, and self-denial of the latter, seemed hardships to one of William's loose turn of mind. When he began to murmur, some good old soldier clapped him on the back, saying, "Cheer up, lad; it is a kingdom you are to strive for: if we faint not, henceforth there is laid up for us a great reward; we have the King's word for it, man." William observed, that to those who truly believed this their labours were as nothing, but he himself did not at the bottom believe it; and it was observed of all the soldiers who failed, the true cause was, that they did not really believe the King's promise. He was surprised to see that those soldiers, who used to bluster, and boast, and deride the assaults of the enemy, now began to fall away; while such as had faithfully obeyed the King's orders, and believed in his word, were sustained in the hour of trial. Those who had trusted in

their own strength all fainted on the slightest attack, while those who had put on the armour of the King's providing, the sword, and the shield, and the helmet, and the breastplate, and whose feet were shod according to order, now endured hardship as good soldiers, and were enabled to fight the good fight.

An engagement was expected immediately. The men were ordered to prepare for battle. While the rest of the corps were so preparing, William's whole thoughts were bent on contriving how he might desert. But, alas! he was watched on all sides; he could not possibly devise any means to escape. The danger increased every moment, the battle came on. William, who had been so sure and confident before he entered, flinched in the moment of trial, while his more quiet and less boastful comrades prepared boldly to do their duty. William looked about on all sides, and saw that there was no eye upon him, for he did not know that the King's eye was everywhere at once. He at last thought he spied a chance of escaping, not from the enemy, but from his own army. While he was endeavouring to escape, a ball from the opposite camp took off his leg. As he fell, the first words which broke from him were, "While I was in my duty, I was preserved; in the very act of deserting, I am wounded." He lay expecting every moment to be trampled to death; but as soon as the confusion was a little over, he was taken off the field by some of his own party, laid in a place of

safety, and left to himself, after his wound was dressed.

The skirmish, for it proved nothing more, was soon over. The greater part of the regiment escaped in safety. William, in the mean time, suffered cruelly both in mind and body. To the pains of a wounded soldier he added the disgrace of a coward, and the infamy of a deserter. "Oh," cried he, "why was I such a fool as to leave the *great family* I lived in, where there was meat and drink enough and to spare, only on account of a little quarrel? — I might have made up that with them, as we had done our former quarrels. Why did I leave a life of ease and pleasure, where I had only a little rub now and then, for a life of daily discipline and constant danger? Why did I turn soldier? Oh, what a miserable animal is a soldier!"

As he was sitting in this weak and disabled condition, uttering the above complaints, he observed a venerable old officer, with thin grey locks on his head, and on his face deep wrinkles engraved by time, and many an honest scar inflicted by war. William had heard this old officer highly commended for his extraordinary courage and conduct in battle, and in peace he used to see him cool and collected, devoutly employed in reading and praying in the interval of more active duties. He could not help comparing this officer with himself. "I," said he, "flinched and drew back, and would even have deserted in the moment of peril; and now, in return, I have no consolation in the hour of repose

and safety. I would not fight then, I cannot pray now. Oh, why would I ever think of being a soldier?" He then began afresh to weep and lament; and he groaned so loud that he drew the notice of the officer, who came up to him, kindly sat down by him, took him by the hand, and enquired, with as much affection as if he had been his brother, what was the matter with him, and what particular distress, more than the common fortune of war, it was which drew from him such bitter groans. "I know something of surgery," added he; "let me examine your wound, and assist you with such little comforts as I can."

William at once saw the difference between the soldiers in the King's army and the people in the great family: the latter commonly withdrew their kindness in sickness and trouble, when most wanted, which was just the very time when the others came forward to assist. He told the officer his little history, the manner of his living in the great family, the trifling cause of his quarrelling with it, the slight ground of his entering into the King's service. "Sir," said he, "I quarrelled with the family, and I thought I was at once fit for the army: I did not know the qualifications it required. I had not reckoned on discipline, and hardships, and self-denial. I liked well enough to sing a loyal song, or drink the King's health; but I find I do not relish working and fighting for him, though I rashly promised even to lay down my life for his service if called upon, when I took the bounty money and the oath of allegiance. In short, sir, I find that I

long for the ease and sloth, the merriment and the feasting of my old service; I find I cannot be a soldier; and, to speak truth, I was in the very act of deserting when I was stopped short by the cannon-ball. So that I feel the guilt of desertion, and the misery of having lost my leg into the bargain."

The officer thus replied: "Your state is that of every worldly, irreligious man. The great family you served is a just picture of the world. The wages the world promises to those who are willing to do its work are high, but the payment is attended with much disappointment; nay, the world, like your great family, is in itself insolvent, and in its very nature incapable of making good the promises, and of paying the high rewards, which it holds out to tempt its credulous followers. The ungodly world, like your family, cares little for church, and still less for prayer; and considers the Bible rather as an instrument to make an oath binding, in order to keep the vulgar in obedience, than as containing in itself a perfect rule of faith and practice, and as a title-deed to heaven. The generality of men love the world as you did your service, while it smiles upon them, and gives them easy work, and plenty of meat and drink; but as soon as it begins to cross and contradict them, they get out of humour with it, just as you did with your service. They then think its drudgery hard, its rewards low. They find out that it is high in its expectations from them, and slack in its payments to them. And they begin to fancy (because they do not hear re-

ligious people murmur as they do) that there must be some happiness in religion. The world, which takes no account of their deeper sins, at length brings them into discredit for some act of imprudence, just as your family overlooked your lying and swearing, but threatened to drub you for breaking a china dish. Such is the judgment of the world! It particularly bears with those who only break the laws of God, but severely punishes the smallest negligence by which they themselves are injured. The world sooner pardons the breaking ten commandments of God than even a china dish of its own.

"After some cross or opposition, worldly men, as I said before, begin to think how much content and cheerfulness they remember to have seen in religious people. They, therefore, begin to fancy that religion must be an easy and delightful, as well as a good thing. They have heard that *her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace;* and they persuade themselves, that by this is meant worldly pleasantness, and sensual peace. They resolve at length to try it, to turn their back upon the world, to engage in the service of God and turn Christians; just as you resolved to leave your old service, to enter into the service of the King, and turn soldier. But as you quitted your place in a passion, so they leave the world in a huff. They do not count the cost. They do not calculate upon the darling sins, the habitual pleasures, the ease and vanities, which they undertake by their new engagements to renounce, any more than you counted

what indulgences you were going to give up when you quitted the luxuries and idleness of your place to enlist in the soldier's warfare. They have, as I said, seen Christians cheerful, and they mistook the ground of their cheerfulness: they fancied it arose, not because through grace they had conquered difficulties, but because they had no difficulties in their passage. They fancied that religion found the road smooth, whereas it only helps to bear with a rough road without complaint. They do not know that these Christians are of good cheer, not because the world is free from tribulation, but because Christ their captain has *overcome the world*. But the irreligious man, who has only seen the outside of a Christian in his worldly intercourse, knows little of his secret conflicts, his trials, his self-denials, his warfare with the world without, and with his own corrupt desires within.

"The irreligious man quarrels with the world on some such occasion as you did with your place. He now puts on the outward forms and ceremonies of religion, and assumes the badge of Christianity, just as you were struck with the shows of a field day; just as you were pleased with the music and the marching, and put on the cockade and the red coat. All seems smooth for a little while. He goes through the outward exercises of a Christian, a degree of credit attends his new profession; but he never suspects there is either difficulty or discipline attending it: he fancies religion is a thing for talking about, and not a thing of the heart and the life. He never suspects that all the psalm-

singing he joins in, and the sermons he hears, and the other means he is using, are only as the exercises and the evolutions of the soldiers, to fit and prepare him for actual service; and that these means are no more religion itself, than the exercises and evolutions of your parade were real warfare.

"At length some trial arises. This nominal Christian is called to differ from the world in some great point; something happens which may strike at his comfort, or his credit, or security. This cools his zeal for religion, just as the view of an engagement cooled your courage as a soldier. He finds he was only *angry* with the world; he was not *tired* of it. He was out of humour with the world, not because he had seen through its vanity and emptiness, but because the world was out of humour with him. He finds that it is an easy thing to be a fair-weather Christian; — bold where there is nothing to be done, and confident where there is nothing to be feared. Difficulties unmask him to others; temptations unmask him to himself; he discovers, that though he is a high professor, he is no Christian: just as you found out that your red coat and your cockade, your shoulder-knot and your musket, did not prevent you from being a coward.

"Your misery in the military life, like that of the nominal Christian, arose from your love of ease, your cowardice, and your self-ignorance. You rushed into a new way of life, without trying after one qualification for it. A total change of heart and temper was necessary for your new calling.

With new views and new principles, the soldier's life would have been not only easy but delightful to you. But while with a new profession you retained your old nature, it is no wonder if all discipline seemed intolerable to you.

"The true Christian, like the brave soldier, is supported under dangers by a strong faith that the fruits of that victory for which he fights will be safety and peace. But, alas! the pleasures of this world are present and visible — the rewards for which he strives are remote. He therefore fails, because nothing short of a lively faith can ever outweigh a strong present temptation, and lead a man to prefer the joys of conquest to the pleasures of indulgence."

BETTY BROWN,

THE

ST. GILES'S ORANGE GIRL:

WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF

MRS. SPONGE, THE MONEY LENDER.

Betty Brown, the Orange Girl, was born nobody knows where, and bred nobody knows how. No girl in all the streets of London could drive a barrow more nimbly, avoid pushing against passengers more dexterously, or cry her "Fine China Oranges" in a shriller voice. But then she could neither sew, nor spin, nor knit, nor wash, nor iron, nor read, nor spell. Betty had not been always in so good a situation as that in which we now describe her. She came into the world before so many good gentlemen and ladies began to concern themselves so kindly that the poor might have a little learning. There was no charitable society then, as there is now, to pick up poor friendless children in the streets*, and put them into a good house, and give them meat, and drink, and lodging, and learning, and teach them to get their bread in an honest way into the bargain. Whereas, this now

* The Philanthropic.

is often the case in London; blessed be God, who *has ordered the bounds of our habitation*, and cast our lot in such a country!

The longest thing that Betty can remember is, that she used to crawl up out of a night cellar, stroll about the streets, and pick cinders from the scavengers' carts. Among the ashes she sometimes found some ragged gauze and dirty ribands; with these she used to dizen herself out, and join the merry bands on the first of May. This was not, however, quite fair, as she did not lawfully belong either to the female dancers, who foot it gaily round the garland, or to the sooty tribe, who, on this happy holiday, forget their whole year's toil in Portman Square, cheered by the tender bounty of her whose wit has long enlivened the most learned, and whose taste and talents long adorned the most polished societies. Betty, however, often got a few scraps, by appearing to belong to both parties. But as she grew bigger, and was not an idle girl, she always put herself in the way of doing something. She would run of errands for the footmen, or sweep the door for the maid of any house where she was known: she would run and fetch some porter, and never was once known either to sip a drop by the way or steal the pot. Her quickness and fidelity in doing little jobs got her into favour with a lazy cook-maid, who was too apt to give away her master's cold meat and beer, not to those who were most in want, but to those who waited upon her, and did the little things for her which she ought to have done herself.

The cook, who found Betty a dexterous girl, soon employed her to sell ends of candles, pieces of meat and cheese, and lumps of butter, or any thing else she could crib from the house. These were all carried to her friend, Mrs. Sponge, who kept a little shop and a kind of eating-house for poor working people, not far from the Seven Dials. She also bought as well as sold many kinds of second-hand things, and was not scrupulous to know whether what she bought was honestly come by, provided she could get it for a sixth part of what it was worth. But if the owner presumed to ask for its real value, then she had sudden qualms of conscience, instantly suspected the things were stolen, and gave herself airs of honesty, which often took in poor silly people, and gave her a sort of half reputation among the needy and the ignorant, whose friend she hypocritically pretended to be.

To this artful woman Betty carried the cook's pilferings; and as Mrs. Sponge would give no great price for these in money, the cook was willing to receive payment for her eatables in Mrs. Sponge's drinkables; for she dealt in all kinds of spirits. I shall only just remark here, that one receiver, like Mrs. Sponge, makes many pilferers, who are tempted to commit these petty thieveries, by knowing how easy it is to dispose of them at such iniquitous houses.

Betty was faithful to both her employers; which is extraordinary, considering the greatness of the temptation, and her utter ignorance of good and

evil. One day she ventured to ask Mrs. Sponge, if she could not assist her to get into a more settled way of life. She told her, that when she rose in the morning she never knew where she should lie at night, nor was she ever sure of a meal beforehand. Mrs. Sponge asked her what she thought herself fit for. Betty, with fear and trembling, said, there was one trade for which she thought herself qualified, but she had not the ambition to look so high; it was far above her humble views; this was, to have a barrow and sell fruit, as several other of Mrs. Sponge's customers did, whom she had often looked up to with envy, little expecting herself ever to attain so high and independent a station.

Mrs. Sponge was an artful woman. Bad as she was, she was always aiming at something of a character; this was a great help to her trade. While she watched keenly to make every thing turn to her own profit, she had a false fawning way of seeming to do all she did out of pity and kindness to the distressed; and she seldom committed an extortion, but she tried to make the persons she cheated believe themselves highly obliged to her kindness. By thus pretending to be their friend, she gained their confidence; and she grew rich herself, while they thought she was only showing favour to them. Various were the arts she had of getting rich; and the money she got by grinding the poor she spent in the most luxurious living; while she would haggle with her hungry customers

for a farthing, she would spend pounds on the most costly delicacies for herself.

Mrs. Sponge, laying aside that haughty look and voice, well known to such as had the misfortune to be in her debt, put on the hypocritical smile and soft canting tone which she always assumed when she meant to flatter her superiors, or take in her dependents. "Betty," said she, "I am resolved to stand your friend. These are sad times to be sure. Money is money now. Yet I am resolved to put you into a handsome way of living. You shall have a barrow, and well furnished, too." Betty could not have felt more joy or gratitude if she had been told that she should have a coach. "O, madam!" said Betty, "it is impossible. I have not a penny in the world towards helping me to set up." — "I will take care of that," said Mrs. Sponge; "only you must do as I bid you. You must pay me interest for my money; and you will of course be glad also to pay so much every night for a nice hot supper which I get ready, *quite out of kindness*, for a number of poor working people. This will be a great comfort for such a friendless girl as you, for my victuals and drink are the best, and my company the merriest of any house in all St. Giles's." Betty thought all this only so many more favours, and, courtesying to the ground, said, "To be sure, ma'am, and thank you a thousand times into the bargain. I never could hope for such a rise in life."

Mrs. Sponge knew what she was about. Betty

was a lively girl, who had a knack at learning any thing; and so well looking through all her dirt and rags, that there was little doubt she would get custom. A barrow was soon provided, and five shillings put into Betty's hands. Mrs. Sponge kindly condescended to go to show her how to buy the fruit; for it was a rule with this prudent gentlewoman, and one from which she never departed, that no one should cheat but herself; and suspecting from her own heart the fraud of all other dealers, she was seldom guilty of the weakness of being imposed upon.

Betty had never possessed such a sum before. She grudged to lay it out all at once, and was ready to fancy she could live upon the capital. The crown, however, was laid out to the best advantage. Betty was carefully taught in what manher to cry her oranges; and received many useful lessons how to get off the bad with the good, and the stale with the fresh. Mrs. Sponge also lent her a few bad sixpences, for which she ordered her to bring home good ones at night. Betty stared. Mrs. Sponge said, "Betty, those who would get money must not be too nice about trifles. Keep one of these sixpences in your hand, and if an ignorant young customer gives you a good sixpence do you immediately slip it into your other hand, and give him the bad one, declaring, that it is the very one you have just received, and be ready to swear that you have not another sixpence in the world. You must also learn how to treat different sorts of customers. To some you may

put off with safety goods which would be quite unsaleable to others. Never offer bad fruit, Betty, to those who know better; never waste the good on those who may be put off with worse; put good oranges at top to attract the eye, and the mouldy ones under for sale."

Poor Betty had not a nice conscience, for she had never learnt that grand but simple rule of all moral obligation, *Never do that to another which you would not have another do to you.* She set off with her barrow, as proud and as happy as if she had been set up in the finest shop in Covent Garden. Betty had a sort of natural good temper, which made her unwilling to impose, but she had no principle which told her it was a sin to do so. She had such good success, that when night came she had not an orange left. With a light heart she drove her empty barrow to Mrs. Sponge's door. She went in with a merry face, and threw down on the counter every farthing she had taken. "Betty," said Mrs. Sponge, "I have a right to it all, as it was got by my money. But I am too generous to take it. I will therefore only take sixpence for this day's use of my five shillings. This is a most reasonable interest, and I will lend you the same sum to trade with to-morrow, and so on; you only paying me sixpence for the use of it every night, which will be a great bargain to you. You must also pay me my price every night for your supper, and you shall have an excellent lodging above stairs; so you see every thing will now be

provided for you in a genteel manner, through my generosity." *

Poor Betty's gratitude blinded her so completely, that she forgot to calculate the vast proportion which this generous benefactress was to receive out of her little gains. She thought herself a happy creature, and went in to supper with a number of others of her own class. For this supper, and for more porter and gin than she ought to have drunk, Betty was forced to pay so high, that it ate up all the profits of the day, which, added to the daily interest, made Mrs. Sponge a rich return for her five shillings.

Betty was reminded again of the gentility of her new situation, as she crept up to bed in one of Mrs. Sponge's garrets five stories high. This loft, to be sure, was small, and had no window, but what it wanted in light was made up in company, as it had three beds, and thrice as many lodgers. These gentry had one night, in a drunken frolic, broken down the door, which happily had never been replaced; for, since that time, the lodgers had died much seldomer of infectious distempers than when they were close shut in. For this lodging Betty paid twice as much to her *good friend* as she would have done to a stranger. Thus she continued, with great industry and a thriving trade, as poor as on the first day, and not a bit nearer to saving

* For an authentic account of numberless frauds of this kind, see that very useful work of Mr. Colquhoun on the *Police of the Metropolis of London.*

money enough to buy her even a pair of shoes, though her feet were nearly on the ground.

One day, as Betty was driving her barrow through a street near Holborn, a lady from a window called out to her that she wanted some oranges. While the servant went to fetch a plate, the lady entered into some talk with Betty, having been struck with her honest countenance and civil manner. She questioned her as to her way of life, and the profits of her trade; and Betty, who had never been so kindly treated before by so genteel a person, was very communicative. She told her little history as far as she knew it, and dwelt much on the generosity of Mrs. Sponge, in keeping her in her house, and trusting her with so large a capital as five shillings. At first it sounded like a very good-natured thing; but the lady, whose husband was one of the justices of the new police, happened to know more of Mrs. Sponge than was good, which led her to enquire still further. Betty owned, that to be sure it was not all clear profit, for, besides that the high price of the supper and bed ran away with all she got, she paid sixpence a day for the use of the five shillings. "And how long have you done this?" said the lady. "About a year, madam."

The lady's eyes were at once opened. "My poor girl," said she, "do you know that you have already paid for that single five shillings the enormous sum of 7*l.* 10*s.*? I believe it is the most profitable five shillings Mrs. Sponge ever laid out." — "O, no, madam," said the girl; "that good gentlewoman does the same kindness to ten or

twelve other poor friendless creatures like yo
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heard of a more lucrative trade than this wom
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you are industrious, you will, at the end of the
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to live now, when you have this heavy interest to
pay, judge how things will mend when your capital
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The lady did not talk thus to save her money.
She would willingly have given the girl the five
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twelve other poor friendless creatures like me." — "Does she so?" said the lady, "then I never heard of a more lucrative trade than this woman carries on, under the mask of charity, at the expense of her poor deluded fellow-creatures."

"But, madam," said Betty, who did not comprehend this lady's arithmetic, "what can I do? I now contrive to pick up a morsel of bread without begging or stealing. Mrs. Sponge has been very good to me; and I don't see how I can help myself."

"I will tell you," said the lady: "if you will follow my advice, you may not only maintain yourself honestly but independently. Only oblige yourself to live hard for a little time, till you have saved five shillings out of your own earnings. Give up that expensive supper at night, drink only one pint of porter, and no gin at all. As soon as you have scraped together the five shillings, carry it back to your false friend; and if you are industrious, you will, at the end of the year, have saved 7*l.* 10*s.* If you can make a shift to live now, when you have this heavy interest to pay, judge how things will mend when your capital becomes your own. You will put some clothes on your back; and by leaving the use of spirits, and the company in which you drink them, your health, your morals, and your condition, will mend."

The lady did not talk thus to save her money. She would willingly have given the girl the five shillings; but she thought it was beginning at the

wrong end. She wanted to try her. Besides, she knew there was more pleasure, as well as honour, in possessing five shillings of one's own saving than of another's giving. Betty promised to obey. She owned she had got no good by the company or the liquor at Mrs. Sponge's. She promised that very night to begin saving the expense of the supper; and that she would not taste a drop of gin till she had the five shillings beforehand. The lady, who knew the power of good habits, was contented with this, thinking, that if the girl could abstain for a certain time it would become easy to her. She therefore, at present, said little about the *sin* of drinking, and only insisted on the *expense* of it.

In a very few weeks Betty had saved up the five shillings. She went to carry back this money with great gratitude to Mrs. Sponge. This kind friend began to abuse her most unmercifully. She called her many hard names, not fit to repeat, for having forsaken the supper, by which she swore she herself got nothing at all; but as she had the charity to dress it for such beggarly wretches, she insisted they should pay for it whether they ate it or not. She also brought in a heavy score for lodging, though Betty had paid for it every night, and had given notice of her intending to quit her. By all these false pretences, she got from her not only her own five shillings but all the little capital with which Betty was going to set up for herself. All was not sufficient to answer her demands; she declared she would send

her to prison; but while she went to call a constable, Betty contrived to make off.

With a light pocket and a heavy heart she went back to the lady; and with many tears told her sad story. The lady's husband, the justice, condescended to listen to Betty's tale. He said Mrs. Sponge had long been upon his books as a receiver of stolen goods. Betty's evidence strengthened his bad opinion of her. "This petty system of usury," said the magistrate, "may be thought trifling; but it will no longer appear so, when you reflect, that if one of these female sharpers possesses a capital of seventy shillings, or 3*l.* 10*s.* with fourteen steady regular customers, she can realise a fixed income of one hundred guineas a year. Add to this the influence such a loan gives her over these friendless creatures, by compelling them to eat at her house, or lodge, or buy liquors, or by taking their pawns, and you will see the extent of the evil. I pity these poor victims: you, Betty, shall point out some of them to me. I will endeavour to open their eyes on their own bad management. It is not by giving to the importunate shillings and half-crowns, and turning them adrift to wait for the next accidental relief, that much good is done. It saves trouble, indeed, but that trouble being the most valuable part of charity ought not to be spared, — at least by those who have leisure as well as affluence. It is one of the greatest acts of kindness to the poor to mend their economy, and to give them right views of laying out their little money to advantage. These

poor blinded creatures look no further than to be able to pay this heavy interest every night, and to obtain the same loan on the same hard terms the next day. Thus are they kept in poverty and bondage all their lives; but I hope as many as hear of this will get on a better plan, and I shall be ready to help any who are willing to help themselves." This worthy magistrate went directly to Mrs. Sponge's with proper officers; and he soon got to the bottom of many iniquities. He not only made her refund poor Betty's money, but committed her to prison for receiving stolen goods, and various other offences, which may, perhaps, make the subject of another history.

Betty was now set up in trade to her heart's content. She had found the benefit of leaving off spirits, and she resolved to drink them no more. The first fruits of this resolution was, that in a fortnight she bought her a new pair of shoes; and as there was now no deduction for interest or for gin, her earnings became considerable. The lady made her a present of a gown and a hat, on the easy condition that she should go to church. She accepted the terms, at first rather as an act of obedience to the lady than from a sense of higher duty. But she soon began to go from a better motive. This constant attendance at church, joined to the instructions of the lady, opened a new world to Betty. She now heard, for the first time, that she was a sinner; that God had given a law which was holy, just, and good; that she had broken this law, had been a swearer, a Sab-

bath-breaker, and had lived *without God in the world.* All this was sad news to Betty; she knew, indeed, before, that there were sinners, but she thought they were only to be found in the prisons, or at Botany Bay, or in those mournful carts which she had sometimes followed with her barrow, with the unthinking crowd, to Tyburn. She was deeply struck with the great truths revealed in the Scripture, which were quite new to her; her heart smote her, and she became anxious *to flee from the wrath to come.* She was desirous of improvement, and said, she would give up all the profits of her barrow, and go into the hardest service, rather than live in sin and ignorance.

"Betty," said the lady, "I am glad to see you so well disposed, and will do what I can for you. Your present way of life, to be sure, exposes you to much danger; but the trade is not unlawful in itself, and we may please God in any calling, provided it be not a dishonest one. In this great town there must be barrow-women to sell fruit. Do you, then, instead of forsaking your business, set a good example to those in it, and show them, that though a dangerous trade it need not be a wicked one. Till Providence points out some safer way of getting your bread, let your companions see that it is possible to be good even in this. Your trade being carried on in the open street, and your fruit bought in an open shop, you are not so much obliged to keep sinful company as may be thought. Take a garret in an honest house, to which you may go home in safety at

night. I will give you a bed and a few necessaries to furnish your room; and I will also give you a constant Sunday's dinner. A barrow-woman, blessed be God and our good laws, is as much her own mistress on Sundays as a duchess; and the church and the Bible are as much open to her. You may soon learn as much of religion as you are expected to know. A barrow-woman may pray as heartily morning and night, and serve God as acceptably all day, while she is carrying on her little trade, as if she had her whole time to spare.

"To do this well, you must mind the following

"RULES FOR RETAIL DEALERS:

"*Resist every temptation to cheat.*
"*Never impose bad goods on false pretences.*
"*Never put off bad money for good.*
"*Never use profane or uncivil language.*

"Never swear your goods cost so much, when you know it is false. By so doing you are guilty of two sins in one breath, a lie and an oath.

"To break these rules will be your chief temptation. God will mark how you behave under them, and will reward or punish you accordingly. These temptations will be as great to you as higher trials are to higher people; but you have the same God to look to for strength to resist them as they have. You must pray to him to give you this strength. You shall attend a Sunday-school, where you will

be taught these good things; and I will promote you as you shall be found to deserve."

Poor Betty here burst into tears of joy and gratitude, crying out, "What! shall such a poor friendless creature as I be treated so kindly, and learn to read the word of God too? Oh, madam, what a lucky chance brought me to your door!" — "Betty," said the lady, "what you have just said shows the need you have of being better taught: there is no such thing as chance; and we offend God when we call that luck or chance which is brought about by his will and pleasure. None of the events of your life have happened by chance; but all have been under the direction of a good and kind Providence. He has permitted you to experience want and distress, that you might acknowledge his hand in your present comfort and prosperity. Above all, you must bless his goodness in sending you to me, not only because I have been of use to you in your worldly affairs, but because he has enabled me to show you the danger of your state from sin and ignorance, and to put you in a way to know his will and to keep his commandments, which is eternal life."

How Betty, by industry and piety, rose in the world, till at length she came to keep that handsome sausage-shop near the Seven Dials, and was married to that very hackney-coachman whose history and honest character may be learned from that ballad of the Cheap Repository which bears his name, may be shown hereafter.

BLACK GILES,

THE POACHER;

CONTAINING

Some Account of a Family who had rather live by their Wits than their Work.

PART I.

POACHING GILES lives on the boders of one of those great moors in Somersetshire. Giles, to be sure, has been a sad fellow in his time; and it is none of his fault if his whole family do not end their career either at the gallows or at Botany Bay. He lives at that mud cottage with the broken windows, stuffed with dirty rags, just beyond the gate which divides the Upper from the Lower Moor. You may know the house at a good distance by the ragged thatch on the roof, and the loose stones which are ready to drop out from the chimney; though a short ladder, a hod of mortar, and half an hour's leisure time, would have prevented all this, and made the little dwelling tight enough. But as Giles had never learnt any thing that was good, so he did not know the value of such useful sayings, as that "a stone in time saves nine."

Besides this, Giles fell into that common mistake, that a beggarly looking cottage, and filthy ragged children, raised most compassion, and of course drew most charity. But as cunning as he was in other things he was out in his reckoning here; for it is neatness, housewifery, and a decent appearance, which draw the kindness of the rich and charitable, while they turn away disgusted from filth and laziness; not out of pride, but because they see that it is next to impossible to mend the condition of those who degrade themselves by dirt and sloth; and few people care to help those who will not help themselves.

The common on which Giles's hovel stands is quite a deep marsh in a wet winter; but in summer it looks green and pretty enough. To be sure it would be rather convenient when one passes that way in a carriage if one of the children would run out and open the gate: but instead of any *one* of them running out as soon as they hear the wheels, which would be quite time enough, what does Giles do, but set all his ragged brats, with dirty faces, matted locks, and naked feet and legs, to lie all day upon a sand-bank hard by the gate, waiting for the slender chance of what may be picked up from travellers. At the sound of a carriage, a whole covey of these little scare-crows start up, rush to the gate, and all at once thrust out their hats and aprons; and for fear this, together with the noise of their clamorous begging, should not sufficiently frighten the horses, they are very apt to let the gate slap full against you, before you are half-way through,

in their eager scuffle to snatch from each other the halfpence which you may have thrown out to them. I know two ladies who were one day very near being killed by these abominable tricks.

Thus five or six little idle creatures, who might be earning a trifle by knitting at home, who might be useful to the public by working in the field, and who might assist their families by learning to get their bread twenty honest ways, are suffered to lie about all day, in the hope of a few chance halfpence, which, after all, they are by no means sure of getting. Indeed, when the neighbouring gentlemen found out that opening the gate was the family trade, they soon left off giving any thing. And I myself, though I used to take out a penny ready to give, had there been only one to receive it, when I see a whole family established in so beggarly a trade, quietly put it back again in my pocket, and give nothing at all. And so few travellers pass that way, that sometimes, after the whole family have lost a day, their gains do not amount to twopence.

As Giles had a far greater taste for living by his wits than his work, he was at one time in hopes that his children might have got a pretty penny by *tumbling* for the diversion of travellers, and he set about training them in that indecent practice; but, unluckily, the moors being level, the carriages travelled faster than the children tumbled. He envied those parents who lived on the London road, over the Wiltshire Downs; which Downs being very hilly, it enables the tumbler to keep pace with the

traveller, till he sometimes extorts, from the light and unthinking, a reward instead of a reproof. I beg leave, however, to put all gentlemen and ladies in mind that such tricks are a kind of apprenticeship to the trades of begging and thieving; and that nothing is more injurious to good morals than to encourage the poor in any habits which may lead them to live upon chance.

Giles, to be sure, as his children grew older, began to train them to such other employments as the idle habits they had learned at the gate very properly qualified them for. The right of common, which some of the poor cottagers have in that part of the country, and which is, doubtless, a considerable advantage to many, was converted by Giles into the means of corrupting his whole family; for his children, as soon as they grew too big for the trade of begging at the gate, were promoted to the dignity of thieving on the moor. Here he kept two or three asses, miserable beings, which, if they had the good fortune to escape an untimely death by starving, did not fail to meet with it by beating. Some of the biggest boys were sent out with these lean and galled animals to carry sand or coals about the neighbouring towns. Both sand and coals were often stolen before they got them to sell; or if not, they always took care to cheat in selling them. By long practice in this art they grew so dexterous, that they could give a pretty good guess how large a coal they could crib out of every bag before the buyer would be likely to miss it.

All their odd time was taken up under the pretence of watching their asses on the moor, or running after five or six half-starved geese; but the truth is, these boys were only watching for an opportunity to steal an odd goose of their neighbours, while they pretended to look after their own. They used also to pluck the quills or the down from these poor live creatures, or half milk a cow before the farmer's maid came with her pail. They all knew how to calculate to a minute what time to be down in a morning to let out their lank hungry beasts, which they had turned over-night into the farmer's field, to steal a little good pasture. They contrived to get there just time enough to escape being caught in replacing the stakes they had pulled out for the cattle to get over: for Giles was a prudent, long-headed fellow; and, wherever he stole food for his colts, took care never to steal stakes from the hedges at the same place. He had sense enough to know that the gain did not make up for the danger: he knew that a loose faggot, pulled from a neighbour's pile of wood, after the family were gone to bed, answered the end better, and was not half the trouble.

Among the many trades which Giles professed, he sometimes practised that of a rat-catcher; but he was addicted to so many tricks, that he never followed the same trade long: for detection will, sooner or later, follow the best-concerted villany. Whenever he was sent for to a farm-house, his custom was to kill a few of the old rats, always taking care to leave a little stock of young ones

alive sufficient to keep up the breed: "for," said he, "if I were to be such a fool as to clear a house or a barn at once, how would my trade be carried on?" And where any barn was overstocked, he used to borrow a few rats from thence just to people a neighbouring granary which had none; and he might have gone on till now, had he not unluckily been caught one evening emptying his cage of rats under Parson Wilson's barn-door.

This worthy minister, Mr. Wilson, used to pity the neglected children of Giles, as much as he blamed the wicked parents. He one day picked up Dick, who was far the best of Giles's bad boys. Dick was loitering about, in a field behind the parson's garden, in search of a hen's nest, his mother having ordered him to bring home a few eggs that night, by hook or by crook, as Giles was resolved to have some pancakes for supper, though he knew that eggs were a penny apiece. Mr. Wilson had long been desirous of snatching some of this vagrant family from ruin; and his chief hopes were bent on Dick, as the least hackneyed in knavery. He had once given him a new pair of shoes, on his promising to go to school next Sunday; but no sooner had Rachel, the boy's mother, got the shoes into her clutches, than she pawned them for a bottle of gin, and ordered the boy to keep out of the parson's sight; and to be sure to play his marbles on Sunday, for the future, at the other end of the parish, and not near the church-yard. Mr. Wilson, however, picked up the boy once more; for it was not his way to

despair of any body. Dick was just going to take to his heels, as usual, for fear the old story of the shoes should be brought forward; but finding he could not get off, what does he do but run into a little puddle of muddy water which lay between him and the parson, that the sight of his naked feet might not bring on the dreaded subject. Now it happened that Mr. Wilson was planting a little field of beans, so he thought this a good opportunity to employ Dick; and he told him he had got some pretty easy work for him. Dick did as he was bid: he willingly went to work, and readily began to plant his beans with despatch and regularity, according to the directions given him.

While the boy was busily at work by himself, Giles happened to come by, having been skulking round the back way to look over the parson's garden wall, to see if there was any thing worth climbing over for on the ensuing night. He spied Dick, and began to scold him for working for the stingy old parson; for Giles had a natural antipathy to whatever belonged to the church. "What has he promised thee a day?" said he; "little enough I dare say." — "He is not to pay me by the day," said Dick; "but says he will give me so much when I have planted this peck, and so much for the next." — "O, O! that alters the case," said Giles. "One may, indeed, get a trifle by this sort of work. I hate your regular day-jobs, where one can't well avoid doing one's work for one's money. Come, give me a handful of the beans: I will teach thee how to plant when thou

art paid for planting by the peck. All we have to do in that case is to despatch the work as fast as we can, and get rid of the beans with all speed; and as to the seed coming up or not, that is no business of ours; we are paid for planting, not for growing. At the rate thou goest on thou wouldst not get sixpence to-night. Come along, bury away." So saying, he took his hatful of the seed, and where Dick had been ordered to set one bean Giles buried a dozen: of course the beans were soon out. But though the peck was emptied, the ground was unplanted. But cunning Giles knew this could not be found out till the time when the beans might be expected to come up; "and then Dick," says he, "the snails and the mice may go shares in the blame; or we can lay the fault on the rooks or the blackbirds." So saying, he sent the boy into the parsonage to receive his pay, taking care to secure about a quarter of the peck of beans for his own colt. He put both bag and beans into his own pocket to carry home, bidding Dick tell Mr. Wilson that he had planted the beans and lost the bag.

In the mean time Giles's other boys were busy in emptying the ponds and trout-streams in the neighbouring manor. They would steal away the carp and tench when they were no bigger than gudgeons. By this untimely depredation they plundered the owner of his property, without enriching themselves. But the pleasure of mischief was reward enough. These and a hundred other little thieveries they committed with such

dexterity that old Tim Crib, whose son was transported last assizes for sheep-stealing, used to be often reproaching his boys, that Giles's sons were worth a hundred of such blockheads as he had; for scarce a night past but Giles had some little comfortable thing for supper which his boys had pilfered in the day, while his undutiful dogs never stole any thing worth having. Giles, in the mean time, was busy in his way, but as busy as he was in laying nets, starting coveys, and training dogs, he always took care that his depredations should not be confined merely to game.

Giles's boys had never seen the inside of a church since they were christened, and the father thought he knew his own interest better than to force them to it; for church-time was the season of their harvest. Then the hens' nests were searched, a stray duck was clapped under the smock frock, the tools which might have been left by chance in a farmyard were picked up, and all the neighbouring pigeon-houses were thinned, so that Giles used to boast to tawny Rachel his wife, that Sunday was to them the most profitable day in the week. With her it was certainly the most laborious day, as she always did her washing and ironing on the Sunday morning, it being, as she said, the only leisure day she had; for on the other days she went about the country telling fortunes, and selling dream-books and wicked songs. Neither her husband's nor her children's clothes were ever mended; and if Sunday, her idle day, had not come about once in every week, it is likely they would never have been

washed neither. You might, however, see her as you were going to church smoothing her own rags on her best red cloak, which she always used for her ironing-cloth on Sundays, for her cloak when she travelled, and for her blanket at night; such a wretched manager was Rachel! Among her other articles of trade, one was to make and sell peppermint and other distilled waters. These she had the cheap art of making without trouble and without expense, for she made them without herbs and without a still. Her way was to fill so many quart bottles with plain water, putting a spoonful of mint water in the mouth of each; these she corked down with rosin, carrying to each customer a phial of real distilled water to taste by way of sample. This was so good that her bottles were commonly bought up without being opened; but if any suspicion arose, and she was forced to uncork a bottle, by the few drops of distilled water lying at top, she even then escaped detection, and took care to get out of reach before the bottle was opened a second time. She was too prudent ever to go twice to the same house.

The upright Magistrate.

THERE is hardly any petty mischief that is not connected with the life of a poacher. Mr. Wilson was aware of this; he was not only a pious clergyman, but an upright justice. He used to say, that people who were truly conscientious must be so in small things as well as in great ones, or they would destroy the effect of their own precepts, and

their example would not be of general use. For this reason he never would accept of a hare or a partridge from any unqualified person in his parish. He did not content himself with shuffling the thing off by asking no questions, and pretending to take it for granted in a general way that the game was fairly come at; but he used to say, that by receiving the booty he connived at the crime, made himself a sharer in it, and if he gave a present to the man who brought it, he even tempted him to repeat the fault.

One day poor Jack Weston, an honest fellow in the neighbourhood, whom Mr. Wilson had kindly visited and relieved in a long sickness, from which he was but just recovered, was brought before him as he was sitting on the justice's bench: Jack was accused of having knocked down a hare; and of all the birds in the air, who should the informer be but Black Giles the poacher? Mr. Wilson was grieved at the charge; he had a great regard for Jack, but he had still a greater regard for the law. The poor fellow pleaded guilty. He did not deny the fact, but said he did not consider it as a crime, for he did not think game was private property; and he owned he had a strong temptation for doing what he had done, which he hoped would plead in his excuse. The Justice desired to know what this temptation was. "Sir," said the poor fellow, "you know I was given over this spring in a bad fever. I had no friend in the world but you, sir. Under God you saved my life by your charitable relief; and I trust also you may have helped to

save my soul by your prayers and your good advice; for, by the grace of God, I have turned over a new leaf since that sickness.

"I know I can never make you amends for all your goodness; but I thought it would be some comfort to my full heart if I could but once give you some little token of my gratitude. So I had trained a pair of nice turtle-doves for Madam Wilson; but they were stolen from me, sir, and I do suspect Black Giles stole them. Yesterday morning, sir, as I was crawling out to my work, for I am still but very weak, a fine hare ran across my path. I did not stay to consider whether it was wrong to kill a hare, but I felt it was right to show my gratitude; so, sir, without a moment's thought I did knock down the hare, which I was going to carry to your worship, because I knew madam was fond of hare. I am truly sorry for my fault, and will submit to whatever punishment your worship may please to inflict."

Mr. Wilson was much moved with this honest confession, and touched with the poor fellow's gratitude. What added to the effect of the story was the weak condition and pale sickly looks of the offender. But this worthy magistrate never suffered his feelings to bias his integrity: he knew that he did not sit on that bench to indulge pity, but to administer justice; and while he was sorry for the offender, he would never justify the offence. "John," said he, "I am surprised that you could for a moment forget that I never accept any gift which causes the giver to break a law. On

Sunday I teach you from the pulpit the laws of God, whose minister I am. At present I fill the chair of the magistrate, to enforce and execute the laws of the land. Between those and the others there is more connection than you are aware. I thank you, John, for your affection to me, and I admire your gratitude; but I must not allow either affection or gratitude to be brought as a plea for a wrong action. It is not your business nor mine, John, to settle whether the game laws are good or bad. Till they are repealed we must obey them. Many, I doubt not, break these laws through ignorance, and many, I am certain, who would not dare to steal a goose or a turkey, make no scruple of knocking down a hare or a partridge. You will hereafter think yourself happy that this your first attempt has proved unsuccessful, as I trust you are too honest a fellow ever to intend to turn poacher. With poaching much moral evil is connected; a habit of nightly depredation; a custom of prowling in the dark for prey produces in time a disrelish for honest labour. He whose first offence was committed without much thought or evil intention, if he happens to succeed a few times in carrying off his booty undiscovered, grows bolder and bolder; and when he fancies there is no shame attending it he very soon gets to persuade himself that there is also no sin. While some people pretend a scruple about stealing a sheep, they partly live by plundering of warrens. But remember that the warrener pays a high rent, and that therefore his rabbits are as much his property

as his sheep. Do not, then, deceive yourselves with these false distinctions. All property is sacred; and as the laws of the land are intended to fence in that property, he who brings up his children to break down any of these fences brings them up to certain sin and ruin. He who begins with robbing orchards, rabbit-warrens, and fish-ponds, will probably end with horse-stealing or highway robbery. Poaching is a regular apprenticeship to bolder crimes. He whom I may commit as a boy to sit in the stocks for killing a partridge may be likely to end at the gallows for killing a man.

"Observe, you who now hear me, the strictness and impartiality of justice. I know Giles to be a worthless fellow, yet it is my duty to take his information; I know Jack Weston to be an honest youth, yet I must be obliged to make him pay the penalty. Giles is a bad man, but he can prove this fact; Jack is a worthy lad, but he has committed this fault. I am sorry for you, Jack; but do not let it grieve you that Giles has played worse tricks a hundred times, and yet got off, while you were detected in the very first offence; for that would be grieving because you are not so great a rogue as Giles. At this moment you think your good luck is very unequal; but all this will one day turn out in your favour. Giles is not the more a favourite of Heaven because he has hitherto escaped Botany Bay or the Hulks; nor is it any mark of God's displeasure against you, John, that you were found out in your very first attempt."

Here the good justice left off speaking, and no one could contradict the truth of what he had said. Weston humbly submitted to his sentence, but he was very poor, and knew not where to raise the money to pay his fine. His character had always been so fair, that several farmers present kindly agreed to advance a trifle each, to prevent his being sent to prison, and he thankfully promised to work out the debt. The justice himself, though he could not soften the law, yet showed Weston so much kindness, that he was enabled, before the year was out, to get out of this difficulty. He began to think more seriously than he had ever yet done, and grew to abhor poaching, not merely from fear but from principle.

We shall soon see whether poaching Giles always got off so successfully. Here we have seen that worldly prosperity is no sure sign of goodness. Next month we may perhaps see that the "triumphing of the wicked is short;" for I then promise to give the Second Part of the Poacher, together with the entertaining story of the Widow Brown's Apple Tree.

PART II.

History of Widow Brown's Apple Tree.

I THINK my readers got so well acquainted last month with Black Giles, the poacher, that they will not expect this month to hear any great good

either of Giles himself, his wife Rachel, or any of their family. I am sorry to expose their tricks, but it is their fault, not mine. If I pretend to speak about people at all, I must tell the truth. I am sure, if folks would but turn about and mend, it would be a thousand times pleasanter to me to write their histories; for it is no comfort to tell of any body's faults. If the world would but grow good, I should be glad enough to publish it; but till it really becomes so, I must go on describing it as it is; otherwise, I should only mislead my readers, instead of instructing them. It is the duty of a faithful historian to relate the evil with the good.

As to Giles and his boys, I am sure old widow Brown has good reason to remember their dexterity. Poor woman! she had a fine little bed of onions in her neat and well-kept garden: she was very fond of her onions; and many a rheumatism has she caught by kneeling down to weed them in a damp day, notwithstanding the little flannel cloak and the bit of an old mat which Madam Wilson gave her, because the old woman would needs weed in wet weather. Her onions she always carefully treasured up for her winter's store; for an onion makes a little broth very relishing, and is, indeed, the only savoury thing poor people are used to get. She had also a small orchard, containing about a dozen apple trees, with which in a good year she has been known to make a couple of barrels of cider, which she sold to her landlord towards paying her rent, besides having a little keg which she was able to

keep back for her own drinking. Well! would you believe it? Giles and his boys marked both onions and apples for their own; indeed, a man who stole so many rabbits from the warren was likely enough to steal onions for sauce. One day, when the widow was abroad on a little business, Giles and his boys made a clear riddance of the onion bed; and when they had pulled up every single onion, they then turned a couple of pigs into the garden, who, allured by the smell, tore up the bed in such a manner, that the widow, when she came home, had not the least doubt but the pigs had been the thieves. To confirm this opinion, they took care to leave the little hatch half open at one end of the garden, and to break down a slight fence at the other end.

I wonder how anybody can find in his heart not to pity and respect poor old widows! There is something so forlorn and helpless in their condition, that, methinks, it is a call on every body, men, women, and children, to do them all the kind services that fall in their way. Surely their having no one to take their part is an additional reason for kind-hearted people not to hurt and oppress them. But it was this very reason which led Giles to do this woman an injury. With what a touching simplicity is it recorded in Scripture of the youth whom our blessed Saviour raised from the dead, that he was the only son of his mother, *and she a widow!*

It happened unluckily for poor widow Brown that her cottage stood quite alone. On several

mornings together (for roguery gets up much earlier than industry) Giles and his boys stole regularly into her orchard, followed by their jack-asses. She was so deaf that she could not hear the asses if they had brayed ever so loud, and to this Giles trusted; for he was very cautious in his rogueries; since he could not otherwise have contrived so long to keep out of prison; for though he was almost always suspected, he had seldom been taken up, and never convicted. The boys used to fill their bags, load their asses, and then march off; and if in their way to the town where the apples were to be sold they chanced to pass by one of their neighbours who might be likely to suspect them, they then all at once began to scream out, "Buy my coal! — buy my sand!"

Besides the trees in her orchard, poor widow Brown had in her small garden one apple tree particularly fine; it was a redstreak, so tempting and so lovely, that Giles's family had watched it with longing eyes, till at last they resolved on a plan for carrying off all this fine fruit in their bags. But it was a nice point to manage. The tree stood directly under her chamber window, so that there was some danger that she might spy them at the work. They therefore determined to wait till the next Sunday morning, when they knew she would not fail to be at church. Sunday came, and during service Giles attended. It was a lone house, as I said before, and the rest of the parish were safe at church. In a trice the tree was cleared, the bags were filled, the asses were whipped, the thieves were off, the coast was clear,

and all was safe and quiet by the time the sermon was over.

Unluckily, however, it happened that this tree was so beautiful, and the fruit so fine, that the people as they used to pass to and from the church were very apt to stop and admire widow Brown's redstreaks; and some of the farmers rather envied her, that in that scarce season, when they hardly expected to make a pie out of a large orchard, she was likely to make a cask of cider from a single tree. I am afraid, indeed, if I must speak out, she herself rather set her heart too much upon this fruit, and had felt as much pride in her tree as gratitude to a good Providence for it; but this failing of hers was no excuse for Giles. The covetousness of this thief had for once got the better of his caution; the tree was too completely stripped, though the youngest boy Dick did beg hard that his father would leave the poor old woman enough for a few dumplings; and when Giles ordered Dick in his turn to shake the tree, the boy did it so gently that hardly any apples fell, for which he got a good stroke of the stick with which the old man was beating down the apples.

The neighbours on their return from church stopped as usual, but it was — not, alas! to admire the apples, for apples there were none left, but to lament the robbery, and console the widow; meantime the redstreaks were safely lodged in Giles's hovel under a few bundles of new hay which he had contrived to pull from the farmer's mow the night before, for the use of his jackasses. Such a

stir, however, began to be made about the widow's apple tree, that Giles, who knew how much his character laid him open to suspicion, as soon as he saw the people safe in church again in the afternoon, ordered his boys to carry each a hatful of the apples and thrust them in at a little casement window which happened to be open in the house of Samuel Price, a very honest carpenter in that parish, who was at church with his whole family. Giles's plan, by this contrivance, was to lay the theft on Price's sons, in case the thing should come to be further enquired into. Here Dick put in a word, and begged and prayed his father not to force them to carry the apples to Price's. But all that he got by his begging was such a knock as had nearly laid him on the earth. "What, you cowardly rascal," said Giles, "you will go and *'peach*, I suppose, and get your father sent to gaol."

Poor widow Brown, though her trouble had made her still weaker than she was, went to church again in the afternoon; indeed, she rightly thought that her being in trouble was a new reason why she ought to go. During the service she tried with all her might not to think of her redstreaks; and whenever they would come into her head, she took up her Prayer-book directly, and so she forgot them a little; and, indeed, she found herself much easier when she came out of the church than when she went in; an effect so commonly produced by prayer, that, methinks, it is a pity people do not try it oftener. Now it hap-

pened oddly enough, that on that Sunday, of all the Sundays in the year, the widow should call in to rest a little at Samuel Price's, to tell over again the lamentable story of the apples, and to consult with him how the thief might be brought to justice. But, oh, reader! guess if you can, for I am sure I cannot tell you, what was her surprise when, on going into Samuel Price's kitchen, she saw her own redstreaks lying in the window! The apples were of a sort too remarkable, for colour, shape, and size, to be mistaken. There was not such another tree in the parish. Widow Brown immediately screamed out, "Alas-a-day! as sure as can be here are my redstreaks; I could swear to them in any court." Samuel Price, who believed his sons to be as honest as himself, was shocked and troubled at the sight. He knew he had no redstreaks of his own; he knew there were no apples in the window when he went to church; he did verily believe these apples to be the widow's. But how they came there he could not possibly guess. He called for Tom, the only one of his sons who now lived at home. Tom was at the Sunday school, which he had never once missed since Mr. Wilson the minister had set up one in the parish. Was such a boy likely to do such a deed?

A crowd was by this time got about Price's door, among which were Giles and his boys, who had already taken care to spread the news that Tom Price was the thief. Most people were unwilling to believe it. His character was very

good, but appearances were strongly against him. Mr. Wilson, who had staid to christen a child, now came in. He was much concerned that Tom Price, the best boy in his school, should stand accused of such a crime. He sent for the boy, examined, and cross-examined him. No marks of guilt appeared. But still, though he pleaded *not guilty*, there lay the redstreaks in his father's window. All the idle fellows in the place, who were most likely to have commited such a theft themselves, were the very people who fell with vengeance on poor Tom. The wicked seldom give any quarter. "This is one of your sanctified ones!" cried they. "This was all the good that Sunday schools did! For their parts they never saw any good come by religion. Sunday was the only day for a little pastime; and if poor boys must be shut up with their godly books, when they ought to be out taking a little pleasure, it was no wonder they made themselves amends by such tricks." Another said, he should like to see Parson Wilson's righteous one well whipped. A third hoped he would be clapped in the stocks for a young hypocrite as he was; while old Giles, who thought the only way to avoid suspicion was by being more violent than the rest, declared, "that he hoped the young dog would be transsported for life."

Mr. Wilson was too wise and too just to proceed against Tom without full proof. He declared the crime was a very heavy one, and he feared that heavy must be the punishment. Tom,

who knew his own innocence, earnestly prayed to God that it might be made to appear as clear as the noonday; and very fervent were his secret devotions on that night.

Black Giles passed his night in a very different manner. He set off as soon as it was dark, with his sons and their jackasses laden with their stolen goods. As such a cry was raised about the apples he did not think it safe to keep them longer at home, but resolved to go and sell them at the next town; borrowing without leave a lame colt out of the moor to assist in carrying off his booty.

Giles and his eldest sons had rare sport all the way in thinking, that while they were enjoying the profit of their plunder, Tom Price would be whipped round the market-place at least, if not sent beyond sea. But the younger boy, Dick, who had naturally a tender heart, though hardened by his long familiarity with sin, could not help crying when he thought that Tom Price might, perhaps, be transported for a crime which he himself had helped to commit. He had had no compunction about the robbery, for he had not been instructed in the great principles of truth and justice; nor would he, therefore, perhaps, have had much remorse about accusing an innocent boy. But, though utterly devoid of principle, he had some remains of natural feeling and of gratitude. Tom Price had often given him a bit of his own bread and cheese; and once, when Dick was like to be drowned, Tom had jumped into the pond with his clothes on, and saved his life

when he was just sinking: the remembrance of all this made his heart heavy. He said nothing; but as he trotted barefoot after the asses, he heard his father and brothers laugh at having outwitted the godly ones; and he grieved to think how poor Tom would suffer for his wickedness, yet fear kept him silent: they called him sulky dog, and lashed the asses till they bled.

In the mean time, Tom Price kept up his spirits as well as he could. He worked hard all day, and prayed heartily night and morning. "It is true," said he to himself, "I am not guilty of this sin; but let this accusation set me on examining myself, and truly repenting of all my other sins; for I find enough to repent of, though I thank God I did not steal the widow's apples."

At length Sunday came, and Tom went to school as usual. As soon as he walked in, there was a great deal of whispering and laughing among the worst of the boys; and he overheard them say, "Who would have thought it? This is master's favourite! This is Parson Wilson's sober Tommy! We sha'n't have Tommy thrown in our teeth again if we go to get a bird's nest, or gather a few nuts on a Sunday." — "Your demure ones are always hypocrites," says another. — "The still sow sucks all the milk," says a third.

Giles's family had always kept clear of the school. Dick, indeed, had sometimes wished to go; not that he had much sense of sin, or desire after goodness, but he thought if he could once

read, he might rise in the world, and not be forced to drive asses all his life. Through this whole Saturday night he could not sleep. He longed to know what would be done to Tom. He began to wish to go to school, but he had not courage; sin is very cowardly. So on the Sunday morning he went and sat himself down under the church wall. Mr. Wilson passed by. It was not his way to reject the most wicked, till he had tried every means to bring them over; and even then he pitied and prayed for them. He had, indeed, long left off talking to Giles's sons; but, seeing Dick sitting by himself, he once more spoke to him, desired him to leave off his vagabond life, and go with him into the school. The boy hung down his head, but made no answer. He did not, however, either rise up and run away, or look sulky as he used to do. The minister desired him once more to go. "Sir," said the boy, "I can't go; I am so big I am ashamed." — "The bigger you are, the less time you have to lose." — "But, sir, I can't read." — "Then it is high time you should learn." — "I should be ashamed to begin to learn my letters." — "The shame is not in beginning to learn them, but in being contented never to know them." — "But, sir, I am so ragged!" — "God looks at the heart, and not at the coat." — "But, sir, I have no shoes and stockings." — "So much the worse. I remember who gave you both. (Here Dick coloured.) It is bad to want shoes and stockings; but still if you can drive your asses a dozen miles without them,

you may certainly walk a hundred yards to school without them." — "But, sir, the good boys will hate me, and won't speak to me." — "Good boys hate nobody; and as to not speaking to you, to be sure they will not keep you company while you go on in your present evil courses; but as soon as they see you wish to reform, they will help you, and pity you, and teach you, and so come along." Here Mr. Wilson took this dirty boy by the hand, and gently pulled him forward, kindly talking to him all the way, in the most condescending manner.

How the whole school stared to see Dick Giles come in! No one, however, dared to say what he thought. The business went on, and Dick slunk into a corner, partly to hide his rags, and partly to hide his sin; for last Sunday's transaction sat heavy on his heart, not because he had stolen the apples, but because Tom Price had been accused. This, I say, made him slink behind. Poor boy! he little thought there was ONE saw him who sees all things, and from whose eye no hole nor corner can hide the sinner; "for he is about our bed, and about our paths, and spieth out all our ways."

It was the custom in that school, and an excellent custom it is, for the master, who was a good and wise man, to mark down in his pocket-book all the events of the week, that he might turn them to some account in his Sunday evening instructions; such as any useful story in the newspaper, any account of boys being drowned as they

were out in a pleasure-boat on Sundays, any sudden death in the parish, or any other remarkable visitation of Providence; insomuch, that many young people in the place, who did not belong to the school, and many parents also, used to drop in for an hour on a Sunday evening, when they were sure to hear something profitable. The minister greatly approved this practice, and often called in himself, which was a great support to the master, and encouragement to the people who attended.

The master had taken a deep concern in the story of widow Brown's apple tree. He could not believe Tom Price was guilty, nor dared he pronounce him innocent; but he resolved to turn the instructions of the present evening to this subject. He began thus: — "My dear boys, however light some of you may make of robbing an orchard, yet I have often told you there is no such thing as a *little* sin, if it be wilful or habitual. I wish now to explain to you, also, that there is hardly such a thing as a *single* solitary sin. You know I teach you not merely to repeat the commandments as an exercise for your memory, but as a rule for your conduct. If you were to come here only to learn to read and spell on a Sunday, I should think that was not employing God's day for God's work; but I teach you to read, that you may, by this means, come so to understand the Bible and the Catechism, as to make every text in the one, and every question and answer in the

other, to be so fixed in your hearts, that they may bring forth in you the fruits of good living."

Master. How many commandments are there?

Boy. Ten.

Master. How many commandments did that boy break who stole widow Brown's apples?

Boy. Only one, master; the eighth.

Master. What is the eighth?

Boy. Thou shalt not steal.

Master. And you are very sure that this was the only one he broke? Now suppose I could prove to you that he probably broke not less than six out of those ten commandments, which the great Lord of heaven himself stooped down from his eternal glory to deliver to men, would you not, then, think it a terrible thing to steal, whether apples or guineas?

Boy. Yes, master.

Master. I will put the case. Some wicked boy has robbed widow Brown's orchard. (Here the eyes of every one were turned on poor Tom Price, except those of Dick Giles, who fixed his on the ground.) I accuse no one, continued the master, Tom Price is a good boy, and was not missing at the time of the robbery; these are two reasons why I presume that he is innocent; but whoever it was, you allow that by stealing these apples he broke the *eighth* commandment?

Boy. Yes, master.

Master. On what day were these apples stolen?

Boy. On Sunday.

Master. What is the fourth commandment?

Boy. Thou shalt keep holy the Sabbath-day.

Master. Does that person keep holy the Sabbath-day who loiters in an orchard on Sunday, when he should be at church, and steals apples when he ought to be saying his prayers?

Boy. No, master.

Master. What command does he break?

Boy. The fourth.

Master. Suppose this boy had parents who had sent him to church, and that he had disobeyed them by not going, would that be keeping the fifth commandment?

Boy. No, master; for the fifth commandment says, *Thou shalt honour thy father and thy mother.*

This was the only part of the case in which poor Dick Giles's heart did not smite him: he knew he had disobeyed no father! for his father, alas! was, still wickeder than himself, and had brought him up to commit the sin. But what a wretched comfort was this! The master went on.

Master. Suppose this boy earnestly coveted this fruit, though it belonged to another person, would that be right?

Boy. No, master; for the tenth commandment says, *Thou shalt not covet.*

Master. Very well. Here are four of God's positive commands already broken. Now do you think thieves ever scruple to use wicked words?

Boy. I am afraid not, master,

Here Dick Giles was not so hardened but that he remembered how many curses had passed between him and his father while they were fill-

ing the bags, and he was afraid to look up. The master went on.

"I will now go one step further. If the thief, to all his other sins, has added that of accusing the innocent to save himself, if he should break the *ninth* commandment, by *bearing false witness against a harmless neighbour*, then six commandments are broken for an *apple!* But if it be otherwise, if Tom Price should be found guilty, it is not his good character shall save him. I shall shed tears over him, but punish him I must, and that severely." — "No, that you sha'n't," roared out Dick Giles, who sprung from his hiding-place, fell on his knees, and burst out a-crying, "Tom Price is as good a boy as ever lived: it was father and I who stole the apples!"

It would have done your heart good to have seen the joy of the master, the modest blushes of Tom Price, and the satisfaction of every honest boy in the school. All shook hands with Tom, and even Dick got some portion of pity. I wish I had room to give my readers the moving exhortation which the master gave. But while Mr. Wilson left the guilty boy to the management of the master, he thought it became himself, as a minister and a magistrate, to go to the extent of the law in punishing the father. Early on the Monday morning he sent to apprehend Giles. In the mean time Mr. Wilson was sent for to a gardener's house two miles distant, to attend a man who was dying. This was a duty to which all others gave way in his mind. He set out

directly; but what was his surprise, on his arrival, to see, on a little bed on the floor, poaching Giles lying in all the agonies of death! Jack Weston, the same poor young man against whom Giles had informed for killing a hare, was kneeling by him, offering him some broth, and talking to him in the kindest manner. Mr. Wilson begged to know the meaning of all this; and Jack Weston spoke as follows:—

"At four this morning, as I was going out to mow, passing under the high wall of this garden, I heard a most dismal moaning. The nearer I came the more dismal it grew. At last, who should I see but poor Giles groaning, and struggling under a quantity of bricks and stones, but not able to stir. The day before he had marked a fine large net on this old wall, and resolved to steal it, for he thought it might do as well to catch partridges as to preserve cherries; so, sir, standing on the very top of this wall, and tugging with all his might to loosen the net from the hooks which fastened it, down came Giles, net, wall, and all; for the wall was gone to decay. It was very high indeed, and poor Giles not only broke his thigh, but has got a terrible blow on his head, and is bruised all over like a mummy. On seeing me, sir, poor Giles cried out, 'Oh, Jack! I did try to ruin thee by lodging that information, and now thou wilt be revenged by letting me lie here and perish.'—'God forbid, Giles!' cried I: 'thou shalt see what sort of revenge a Christian takes.' So, sir, I sent off the gardener's boy to

fetch a surgeon, while I scampered home and brought on my back this bit of a hammock, which is, indeed, my own bed, and put Giles upon it; we then lifted him up, bed and all, as tenderly as if he had been a gentleman, and brought him in here. My wife has just brought him a drop of nice broth; and now, sir, as I have done what I could for his poor perishing body, it was I who took the liberty to send to you to come to try to help his poor soul, for the doctor says he can't live."

Mr. Wilson could not help saying to himself, 'Such an action as this is worth a whole volume of comments on that precept of our blessed Master, *Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you.*" Giles's dying groans confirmed the sad account Weston had just given. The poor wretch could neither pray himself nor attend to the minister. He could only cry out, "Oh! sir, what will become of me? I don't know how to repent. Oh, my poor wicked children! Sir, I have bred them all up in sin and ignorance. Have mercy on them, sir; let me not meet them in the place of torment to which I am going. Lord grant them that time for repentance which I have thrown away!" He languished a few days, and died in great misery:—a fresh and sad instance that people who abuse the grace of God and resist his Spirit find it difficult to repent when they will.

Except the minister and Jack Weston, no one came to see poor Giles, besides Tommy Price, who had been so sadly wronged by him. Tom

often brought him his own rice-milk or apple-dumpling; and Giles, ignorant and depraved as he was, often cried out, "That he thought now there must be some truth in religion, since it taught even a boy to *deny himself* and to *forgive an injury.*" Mr. Wilson, the next Sunday, made a moving discourse on the danger of what are called *petty offences.* This, together with the awful death of Giles, produced such an effect that no poacher has been able to show his head in that parish ever since.

TAWNEY RACHEL;

OR,

THE FORTUNE-TELLER:

WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF

DREAMS, OMENS, AND CONJURORS.

TAWNEY RACHEL was the wife of poaching Giles. There seemed to be a conspiracy in Giles's whole family to maintain themselves by tricks and pilfering. Regular labour and honest industry did not suit their idle habits. They had a sort of genius at finding out every unlawful means to support a vagabond life. Rachel travelled the country with a basket on her arm. She pretended to get her bread by selling laces, cabbage-nets, ballads, and history books, and used to buy old rags and rabbit-skins. Many honest people trade in these things, and I am sure I do not mean to say a word against honest people, let them trade in what they will. But Rachel only made this traffic a pretence for getting admittance into farmers' kitchens, in order to tell fortunes.

She was continually practising on the credulity of silly girls; and took advantage of their ignorance to cheat and deceive them. Many an innocent servant has she caused to be suspected of a

robbery, while she herself, perhaps, was in league with the thief. Many a harmless maid has she brought to ruin by first contriving plots and events herself, and then pretending to foretell them. She had not, to be sure, the power of really foretelling things, because she had no power of seeing into futurity; but she had the art sometimes to bring them about according as she had foretold them. So she got that credit for her wisdom which really belonged to her wickedness.

Rachel was also a famous interpreter of dreams, and could distinguish exactly between the fate of any two persons who happened to have a mole on the right or the left cheek. She had a cunning way of getting herself off when any of her prophecies failed. When she explained a dream according to the natural appearance of things, and it did not come to pass, then she would get out of that scrape by saying, that this sort of dreams went by contraries. Now of two very opposite things the chance always is that one of them may turn out to be true; so in either case she kept up the cheat.

Rachel, in one of her rambles, stopped at the house of Farmer Jenkins. She contrived to call when she knew the master of the house was from home, which, indeed, was her usual way. She knocked at the door; the maids being in the field hay-making, Mrs. Jenkins went to open it herself. Rachel asked her if she would please to let her light her pipe? This was a common pretence, when she could find no other way of getting into

a house. While she was filling her pipe, she looked at Mrs. Jenkins, and said, she could tell her some good fortune. The farmer's wife, who was a very inoffensive, but a weak and superstitious woman, was curious to know what she meant. Rachel then looked about very carefully, and shutting the door with a mysterious air, asked her if she was sure nobody would hear them. This appearance of mystery was at once delightful and terrifying to Mrs. Jenkins, who, with trembling agitation, bid the cunning woman speak out. "Then," said Rachel in a solemn whisper, "there is to my certain knowledge a pot of money hid under one of the stones in your cellar." — "Indeed!" said Mrs. Jenkins, "it is impossible; for now I think of it, I dreamt last night I was in prison for debt." — "Did you really?" said Rachel; "that is quite surprising. Did you dream this before twelve o'clock or after?" — "O it was this morning, just before I awoke." — "Then I am sure it is true, for morning dreams always go by contraries," cried Rachel. "How lucky it was you dreamt it so late!" — Mrs. Jenkins could hardly contain her joy, and asked how the money was to be come at. "There is but one way," said Rachel: "I must go into the cellar. I know by my art under which stone it lies, but I must not tell." Then they both went down into the cellar, but Rachel refused to point at the stone unless Mrs. Jenkins would put five pieces of gold into a a basin and do as she directed. The simple woman, instead of turning her out of doors for a

cheat, did as she was bid. She put the guineas into a basin which she gave into Rachel's hand. Rachel strewed some white powder over the gold, muttered some barbarous words, and pretended to perform the black art. She then told Mrs. Jenkins to put the basin quietly down within the cellar; telling her that if she offered to look into it, or even to speak a word, the charm would be broken. She also directed her to lock the cellar door, and on no pretence to open it in less than forty-eight hours. "If," added she, "you closely follow these directions, then, by the power of my art, you will find the basin conveyed to the very stone under which the money lies hid, and a fine treasure it will be!" Mrs. Jenkins, who firmly believed every word the woman said, did exactly as she was told, and Rachel took her leave with a handsome reward.

When Farmer Jenkins came home he desired his wife to draw him a cup of cider: this she put off doing so long that he began to be displeased. At last she begged he would be so good as drink a little beer instead. He insisted on knowing the reason, and when at last he grew angry, she told him all that had passed; and owned that as the pot of gold happened to be in the cider cellar, she did not dare open the door, as she was sure it would break the charm. "And it would be a pity, you know," said she, "to lose a good fortune for the sake of a draught of cider." The farmer, who was not so easily imposed upon, suspected a trick. He demanded the key, and went and opened the

cellar door: there he found the basin, and in it five round pieces of tin covered with powder. Mrs. Jenkins burst out a crying; but the farmer thought of nothing but of getting a warrant to apprehend the cunning woman. Indeed, she well proved her claim to that name, when she insisted that the cellar door might be kept locked till she had time to get out of the reach of all pursuit.

Poor Sally Evans! I am sure she rued the day that ever she listened to a fortune-teller! Sally was as harmless a girl as ever churned a pound of butter; but Sally was credulous, ignorant, and superstitious. She delighted in dream-books, and had consulted all the cunning women in the country to tell her whether the two moles on her cheek denoted that she was to have two husbands, or only two children. If she picked up an old horse-shoe going to church, she was sure that would be a lucky week. She never made a black-pudding without borrowing one of the parson's old wigs to hang in the chimney, firmly believing there were no other means to preserve them from bursting. She would never go to bed on Midsummer-eve without sticking up in her room the well-known plant called Midsummer-men, as the bending of the leaves to the right or to the left would not fail to tell her whether Jacob, of whom we shall speak presently, was true or false. She would rather go five miles about than pass near a church-yard at night. Every seventh year she would not eat beans because they grew downward in the pod, instead of upward; and, though a

very neat girl, she would rather have gone with her gown open than have taken a pin from an old woman, for fear of being bewitched. Poor Sally had so many unlucky days in her calendar, that a large portion of her time became of little use, because on these days she did not dare set about any new work. And she would have refused the best offer in the country if made to her on a Friday, which she thought so unlucky a day that she often said what a pity it was that there were any Friday in the week. Sally had twenty pounds left her by her grandmother. She had long been courted by Jacob, a sober lad, with whom she lived fellow-servant at a creditable farmer's. Honest Jacob, like his namesake of old, thought it little to wait seven years to get this damsel to wife, because of the love he bore her; for Sally had promised to marry him when he could match her twenty pounds with another of his own.

Now there was one Robert, a rambling, idle young gardener, who, instead of sitting down steadily in one place, used to roam about the country, and do odd jobs where he could get them. No one understood any thing about him, except that he was a down-looking fellow, who came nobody knew whence, and got his bread nobody knew how, and never had a penny in his pocket. Robert, who was now in the neighbourhood, happened to hear of Sally Evans and her twenty pounds. He immediately conceived a a longing desire for the latter. So he went to his old friend Rachel the fortune-teller, told her all

he had heard of Sally, and promised if she could bring about a marriage between them, she should go shares in the money.

Rachel undertook the business. She set off to the farm-house, and fell to singing one of her most enticing songs just under the dairy window. Sally was so struck with the pretty tune, which was unhappily used, as is too often the case, to set off some very loose words, that she jumped up, dropped the skimming-dish into the cream, and ran out to buy the song. While she stooped down to rummage the basket for those songs which had the most tragical pictures, (for Sally had a tender heart, and delighted in whatever was mournful,) Rachel looked steadfastly in her face, and told her she knew by her art that she was born to good fortune, but advised her not to throw herself away. "These two moles on your cheek," added she, "show you are in some danger." — "Do they denote husbands or children?" cried Sally, starting up, and letting fall the song of the children in the wood. — "Husbands," muttered Rachel. — "Alas! poor Jacob!" said Sally, mournfully, "then he will die first, won't he?" — "Mum for that," quoth the fortune-teller; "I will say no more." Sally was impatient; but the more curiosity she discovered, the more mystery Rachel affected. At last she said, "If you will cross my hand with a piece of silver, I will tell your fortune: by the power of my art I can do this three ways; first, by cards, next by the lines of your hand, or by turning a cup of tea-grounds;

which will you have?" — "O, all! all!" cried Sally, looking up with reverence to this sun-burnt oracle of wisdom, who was possessed of no less than three different ways of diving into the secrets of futurity. Alas! persons of better sense than Sally have been so taken in; the more is the pity! The poor girl said, she would run up stairs to her little box, where she kept her money tied up in a bit of an old glove, and would bring down a bright Queen Anne's sixpence, very crooked. "I am sure," added she, "it is a lucky one; for it cured me of a very bad ague last spring, by only laying it nine nights under my pillow without speaking a word. But then you must know what gave the virtue to this sixpence was, that it had belonged to three young men of the name of John; I am sure I had work enough to get it. But true it is, it certainly cured me. It must be the sixpence, you know, for I am sure I did nothing else for my ague, except, indeed, taking some bitter stuff every three hours, which the doctor called bark. To be sure I lost my ague soon after I took it; but I am certain it was owing to the crooked sixpence, and not to the bark. And so, good woman, you may come in if you will, for there is not a soul in the house but me." This was the very thing Rachel wanted to know, and very glad she was to learn it.

While Sally was above stairs untying her glove, Rachel slipped into the parlour, took a small silver cup from the beaufet, and clapped it into her pocket. Sally ran down, lamenting that she had lost her sixpence, which she verily believed

was owing to her having put it into a left-hand glove, instead of a right one. Rachel comforted her by saying, that if she gave her two plain ones instead, the charm would work just as well. Simple Sally thought herself happy to be let off so easily, never calculating that a smooth shilling was worth two crooked sixpences. But this skill was a part of the black art in which Rachel excelled. She took the money, and began to examine the lines of Sally's left hand. She bit her withered lip, shook her head, and bade her poor dupe beware of a young man who had black hair. "No, indeed," cried Sally all in a fright, "you mean black eyes, for our Jacob has got brown hair: 'tis his eyes that are black." — "That is the very thing I was going to say," muttered Rachel; — "I meant eyes though I said hair; for I know his hair is as brown as a chestnut, and his eyes as black as a sloe." — "So they are, sure enough," cried Sally: "how in the world could you know that?" forgetting that she herself had just told her so. And it is thus that these hags pick out of the credulous all which they afterwards pretend to reveal to them. "O, I know a pretty deal more than that," said Rachel, "but you must be aware of this man." — "Why so?" cried Sally with great quickness. — "Because," answered Rachel, "you are fated to marry a man worth a hundred of him, who has blue eyes, light hair, and a stoop in the shoulders." — "No indeed, but I can't," said Sally: "I have promised Jacob, and Jacob I will marry." — "You cannot,

child," returned Rachel, in a solemn tone: "it is out of your power; you are *fated* to marry the grey eyes and light hair." — "Nay, indeed," said Sally, sighing deeply: "if I am fated, I must: I know there's no resisting one's fate." This is a common cant with poor deluded girls, who are not aware that they themselves make their fate by their folly, and then complain there is no resisting it. — "What can I do?" said Sally. — "I will tell you that too," said Rachel. "You must take a walk next Sunday afternoon to the church-yard, and the first man you meet in a blue coat, with a large posy of pinks and southernwood in his bosom, sitting on the churchyard wall, about seven o'clock, he will be the man." — "Provided," said Sally, much disturbed, "that he has grey eyes, and stoops." — "O, to be sure," said Rachel, "otherwise it is not the right man." — "But if I should mistake," said Sally; "for two men may happen to have a coat and eyes of the same colour?" — "To prevent that," replied Rachel, "if it is the right man, the two first letters of his name will be R. P. This man has got money beyond sea." — "O, I do not value his money," said Sally, with tears in her eyes, "for I love Jacob better than house or land; but if I am fated to marry another, I can't help it: you know there is no struggling against my fate."

Poor Sally thought of nothing, and dreamt of nothing all the week but the blue coat and the grey eyes. She made a hundred blunders at her works. She put her rennet into the butter-pan,

and her skimming-dish into the cheese-tub. She gave the curd to the hogs, and put the whey into the vats. She put her little knife out of her pocket for fear it should cut love, and would not stay in the kitchen, if there was not an even number of people, lest it should break the charm. She grew cold and mysterious in her behaviour to faithful Jacob, whom she truly loved. But the more she thought of the fortune-teller, the more she was convinced that brown hair and black eyes were not what she was fated to marry, and, therefore, though she trembled to think it, Jacob could not be the man.

On Sunday she was too uneasy to go to church; for poor Sally had never been taught that her being uneasy was only a fresh reason why she ought to go thither. She spent the whole afternoon in her little garret, dressing in all her best. First she put on her red riband, which she had bought at last Lammas fair: then she recollected that red was an unlucky colour, and changed it for a blue riband, tied in a true lover's knot; but suddenly calling to mind that poor Jacob had bought this knot for her of a pedlar at the door, and that she had promised to wear it for his sake, her heart smote her, and she laid it by, sighing to think she was not fated to marry the man who had given it to her. When she had looked at herself twenty times in the glass (for one vain action always brings on another), she set off, trembling and shaking every step she went. She walked eagerly towards the church-yard, not daring

to look to the right or left, for fear she should spy Jacob, who would have offered to walk with her, and so have spoilt all. As soon as she came within sight of the wall, she spied a man sitting upon it. Her heart beat violently. She looked again; but, alas! the stranger not only had on a black coat, but neither hair nor eyes answered the description. She now happened to cast her eyes on the church clock, and found she was two hours before her time. This was some comfort. She walked away, and got rid of the two hours as well as she could, paying great attention as she went not to walk over any straws which lay across, and carefully looking to see if there were never an an old horse-shoe in the way, that infallible symptom of good fortune. While the clock was striking seven, she returned to the church-yard, and, O! the wonderful power of fortune-tellers! there she saw him! there sat the very man! his hair as light as flax, his eyes as blue as butter-milk, and his shoulders as round as a tub. Every tittle agreed, to the very nosegay in his waistcoat button-hole. At first, indeed, she thought it had been sweetbriar, and, glad to catch at a straw, whispered to herself, "It is not he, and I shall marry Jacob still;" but on looking again, she saw it was southernwood plain enough, and that of course all was over. The man accosted her with some very nonsensical, but too acceptable, compliments. Sally was naturally a modest girl, and but for Rachel's wicked arts would not have had courage to talk with a strange man; but how could she

resist her fate, you know? After a little discourse, she asked him, with a trembling heart, what might be his name. "Robert Price, at your service," was the answer. "Robert Price! that is R. P. as sure as I am alive, and the fortune-teller was a witch! It is all out! it is all out! O! the wonderful art of fortune-tellers!"

The little sleep she had that night was disturbed with dreams of graves, and ghosts, and funerals; but as they were morning dreams, she knew those always went by contraries, and that a funeral denoted a wedding. Still a sigh would now and then heave, to think that in that wedding Jacob could have no part. Such of my readers as know the power which superstition has over the weak and credulous mind, scarcely need be told, that poor Sally's unhappiness was soon completed. She forgot all her vows to Jacob: she at once forsook an honest man whom she loved, and consented to marry a stranger, of whom she knew nothing, from a ridiculous notion that she was compelled to do so by a decree which she had it not in her power to resist. She married this Robert Price, the strange gardener, whom she soon found to be very worthless, and very much in debt. He had no such thing as "money beyond sea," as the fortune-teller had told her; but, alas! he had another wife there. He got immediate possession of Sally's twenty pounds. Rachel put in for her share; but he refused to give her a farthing, and bid her get away, or he would have her taken up on the vagrant act. He soon ran

away from Sally, leaving her to bewail her own weakness; for it was that, indeed, and not any irresistible fate, which had been the cause of her ruin. To complete her misery, she herself was suspected of having stolen the silver cup which Rachel had pocketed. Her master, however, would not prosecute her, as she was falling into a deep decline, and she died in a few months of a broken heart, a sad warning to all credulous girls.

Rachel, whenever she got near home, used to drop her trade of fortune-telling, and only dealt in the wares of her basket. Mr. Wilson, the clergyman, found her one day dealing out some very wicked ballads to some children. He went up with a view to give her a reprimand; but had no sooner begun his exhortation than up came a constable, followed by several people. — "There she is, that is she, that is the old witch who tricked my wife out of the five guineas," said one of them. "Do your office, constable; seize that old hag. She may tell fortunes and find pots of gold in Taunton gaol, for there she will have nothing else to do!" This was that very farmer Jenkins, whose wife had been cheated by Rachel of the five guineas. He had taken pains to trace her to her own parish: he did not so much value the loss of the money, as he thought it was a duty he owed the public to clear the country of such vermin. Mr. Wilson immediately committed her. She took her trial at the next assizes, when she was sentenced to a year's imprisonment. In the meantime, the pawnbroker to whom she had sold

the silver cup, which she had stolen from poor Sally's master, impeached her; and as the robbery was fully proved upon Rachel, she was sentenced for this crime to Botany Bay; and a happy day it was for the county of Somerset, when such a nuisance was sent out of it. She was transported much about the same time that her husband Giles lost his life, in stealing the net from the garden wall, as related in the second part of poaching Giles.

I have thought it my duty to print this little history as a kind warning to all you young men and maidens not to have any thing to say to *cheats, impostors, cunning women, fortune-tellers, conjurers,* and *interpreters of dreams.* Listen to me, your true friend, when I assure you that God never reveals to weak and wicked women those secret designs of his providence, which no human wisdom is able to foresee. To consult these false oracles is not only foolish, but sinful. It is foolish, because they are themselves as ignorant as those whom they pretend to teach; and it is sinful, because it is prying into that futurity which God, in mercy as well as wisdom, hides from men. God, indeed, *orders* all things; but when you have a mind to do a foolish thing, do not fancy you are *fated* to do it. This is tempting Providence, and not trusting him. It is, indeed, *charging God with folly.* Prudence is his gift, and you obey him better when you make use of prudence, under the direction of prayer, than when you madly run into ruin, and think you are only submitting to your *fate.*

Never fancy that you are compelled to undo yourself, or to rush upon your own destruction, in compliance with any supposed fatality. Never believe that God conceals his will from a sober Christian who obey his laws, and reveals it to a vagabond gipsy who runs up and down breaking the laws both of God and man. King Saul never consulted the witch till he had left off serving God. The Bible will direct us what to do better than any conjurer, and there are no days unlucky but those which we make so by our own vanity, sin, and folly.

MORAL SKETCHES

OF

PREVAILING OPINIONS AND MANNERS,

Foreign and Domestic:

WITH

REFLECTIONS ON PRAYER.

Let us make a stand on the ancient ways, and then look about us, and discover what is the straight and right way, and walk in it.

Lord BACON *on Innovation.*

I know not which is the greater wonder, either that prayer, which is a duty so easy and facile, so ready and apted to the powers and skill and opportunities of every man, should have so great effects, and be productive of such mighty blessings; or that we should be so unwilling to use so easy an instrument of producing so much good.

Bishop JEREMY TAYLOR.

PREFACE

TO

THE SIXTH EDITION.

In the second and subsequent editions of this little work, a brief reference * was made to the character of our late revered Sovereign. Since the publication of the fifth edition, it has pleased Almighty God to exchange his earthly for an imperishable crown. The writer feels a strong desire, though long confined to the bed of sickness, to bear her last testimony, weak and worthless though it be, to the memory of our now beatified Sovereign.

If there be such a thing as a character formed of the elements of the land which gave it birth, it was realized in the present instance. Our King exhibited the exactest specimen of the genuine English gentleman in its highest and fairest form: he had not only the general stamp and impress, but the minor modes and peculiarities of a Briton. He was also a fair representative of the *religion* of his country. He was a *Protestant*, not in name, but in heart and soul.

He began his reign with an act of self-control, which gave a flattering presage of his future mag-

* Page 216.

nanimity. He sacrificed, in the tenderest point, passion to duty. In the bloom of life, young, ardent, and a king, he felt there was something to which even kings must submit, — the laws of their country. He made the sacrifice, and, by so doing, was rewarded in his large and lovely family by the long enjoyment of the dearest blessings of domestic life in their highest purity, and in the greatest human perfection.

A strict conscientiousness seems to have pervaded every part of his character; — it appeared in his frequently-repeated solemn reverence for his coronation-oath; in his uniform desire to promote the good of his people; in his zeal for the spiritual welfare of the poor, expressed in a sentiment too notorious to require repetition. The fear of God seems to have been supremely his governing principle; and a deep sense of his own awful responsibility, the corresponding result of that principle.

If, from a too tenacious hold of an opinion once adopted, he might be chargeable with a political error in a persevering contest with the western continent, yet even then his pertinacity was principle; and if he was wrong, it was his judgment which erred, and not his intention: but he knew, even in this case, how to retract gracefully a favourite opinion when the event required concession. In a visit he made from Cheltenham to Dean Tucker, at Gloucester (who had written strongly in favour of a separation), the King had the candour to say, " Mr. Dean, had we followed your

advice by an earlier termination of the war with America, we had acted wisely: you were in the right." This the Dean repeated to the writer a few days after, together with the whole conversation, which was so honourable to the good sense, general knowledge, and rectitude of mind of His Majesty, that it is to be regretted it had not been preserved.

His understanding, though, perhaps, it had not received the highest cultivation of which it was susceptible, was soundly good, and the whole bent and bias of that understanding was turned to objects of utility. In such of his conversations as have been recorded by Johnson, Beattie, and others, his talents are seen to great advantage. His observations are acute, and his expression neat. In the details of business he was said to be singularly accurate, and particularly well informed in the local circumstances of whatever place was the subject under consideration. His domestic duties were filled with eminent fidelity and uniform tenderness. His family enjoyments were the relief and solace of his public cares; while the proverbial correctness of his court furnished a model to contemporary sovereigns, and bequeathed a noble pattern to his own illustrious posterity. He observed the law of kindness as scrupulously as he observed all other laws; nor was its exercise limited to those about his person or court, but extended to as many of inferior rank as fell under his observation.

He was strictly punctual in the discharge of his

religious duties, a practice which alone could have enabled him to fulfil his other duties in so exemplary a manner. The writer has heard an inhabitant of Windsor (a physician of distinguished learning and piety) declare, that in his constant attendance at the morning chapel, his own heart was warmed, and his pious affections raised, by the devout energy of the King's responses. Who shall presume to say what portion of the prosperity of his favoured people may have been obtained for them by the supplications of a patriot, paternal, praying king?

Firmly attached to the church of which God had made him the supreme head; strong in that faith of which God had appointed him the hereditary defender, he yet suffered no act of religious persecution to dishonour his reign. His firmness was without intolerance, his moderation without laxity.

Though involved in darkness, both bodily and mental, for so many of his latter years, he was still regarded with a sentiment compounded of sorrow, respect, and tenderness. He was, indeed, consigned to seclusion, but not to oblivion. The distinctions of party, with respect to him, were lost in one common feeling: and the afflicted monarch was ever cherished in the hearts of the virtuous of every denomination, whether religious or political.

Even in the aberrations of reason he was not forsaken. The hand which inflicted the blow mercifully mitigated the pain. His wounded mind was soothed by visionary anticipations of heavenly

happiness. — Might not these fanciful consolations indicate something of the habit of a mind accustomed in its brighter hours to the indulgence of pious thoughts? And may we not in general venture to observe, in vindication of the severer dispensations of the Almighty, that even during the distressful season of alienation of mind, the hours which are passed without sorrow and without sin are not, to the sufferer, among the most unhappy hours.

Notwithstanding the calamities with which it has lately pleased God to afflict a guilty world, calamities in which England has had its share, though by no means an equal share, yet the reign of the third George may be called a brilliant and glorious period. Independently of the splendour of our geographical discoveries, our eastern acquisitions, and other memorable political events, we may challenge any era in the history of the world to produce a catalogue of the twentieth part of the noble institutions which have characterized and consecrated this auspicious reign: of these, some have successfully promoted every elegant art, and others every useful science. Painting, statuary, and engraving have been brought into fresh existence under the royal patronage; the application of chemistry and mechanics to the purposes of common life has been attended with unexampled success. Signals at sea have been reduced to a science; the telegraph has been invented; military tactics are said to have been carried to their utmost perfection. Among the gentle arts of peace, the study of agriculture, which the King

loved and cultivated, has become one among the favourite pursuits of our honourable men.

The time would fail to recount the numberless domestic societies of every conceivable description established for promoting the moral and temporal good of our country; persons of high rank, even of the highest, men of all parties and professions, periodically assemble to contrive the best means to instruct the ignorant, and to reclaim the vicious; to relieve every want which man can feel, or man can mitigate; to heal the disturbed in mind, or the diseased in body; nay, to resuscitate the apparently dead: prisons have been converted into places of moral improvement, and the number of churches has been rapidly multiplying. But the peculiar glory which distinguishes the period we are commemorating is that of our having wiped out the foulest blot that ever stained, not only the character of Christian Britain, but of human nature itself, by the abolition of the opprobrious traffic in the human species.

If we advert to other remarkable circumstances which distinguish this reign, — while new worlds have been discerned in the heavens, one of which bears the honoured name of the sovereign under whose dominion it was discovered, — on the earth, Christianity has been successfully carried to its utmost boundaries. In this reign, also, it has been our pre-eminent glory to have fought single-handed against the combined world; yet not by our own strength, but by the arm of the Lord of Hosts, England has been victorious.

England, it is true, labours at present under

great and multiplied, but we trust not insuperable, difficulties. We have the misfortune of a depressed commerce, but we have the consolation of an untarnished honour; we have still a high national character, and in a nation character is power and wealth. To the distresses inflicted by Divine Providence, our own countrymen have made a large and most criminal addition. In looking out for the causes of this appalling visitation, may not one of those causes be found in our not having used the sudden flow of our prosperity with gratitude, humility, and moderation?

Great are our exigencies, but great are our resources. We possess a powerful stock of talent, and of virtue; and in spite of the blasphemies of the atheist, and the treasons of the abandoned, we possess, it is presumed, an increasing fund of vital religion.

Were these and all our other numberless resources thrown into one scale, and applied to the same grand ends, and objects; would party, at this critical juncture, renounce the operation of its narrowing spirit; would every professed patriot show himself zealous, not for the magnifying of his own set, but for the substantial interests of his country; what a mighty aggregate of blessings would be the result, and how reasonably might we then expect the Divine favour on a union so moral, so patriotic, so Christian!

It has pleased God in his mercy to restore to health the son of our late monarch, and to place him on the throne of his illustrious ancestors. We have the sanction of his own royal word, that he

will walk in the steps of his beloved parent. We have an earnest of his gracious intentions. Every church has resounded with the royal proclamation for the encouragement of piety and virtue, and for punishing profaneness, vice, and immorality. He has pledged his honour, — honour is the law of kings, — and *his* honour is unimpeachable. In spite of the machinations of the wicked, he wears by acclamation his hereditary crown, and

> May He who wears the crown immortally,
> Long guard it his!

He has commenced his reign auspiciously with a public act of wise and well-timed beneficence. By His Majesty's dedication of a large portion of land with a noble pecuniary bounty to a most important purpose, DARTMOOR will hold out to posterity a lasting monument of royal liberality. By this permanent establishment for the protection and support of a large class of helpless, houseless beings, not only will the desert be literally converted into a fruitful field, but the neglected human plant will be reared and cultivated, the body rescued from the miseries of want, the mind from the desolation of ignorance, and the heart from the corruptions of idleness, and the ravages of sin.

> " These are imperial arts, and worthy kings! "

O may he so live in the hearts of his people, and so reign in the fear of God, that it may become hereafter a matter of controversy among unborn historians whether the third or fourth GEORGE will have the fairest claim to the now proverbial appellation of the BEST OF KINGS!

PREFACE

TO

THE FIRST EDITION.

It is with the sincerest satisfaction, and the most lively gratitude to God, that the writer of these pages is enabled to bear her feeble but heart-felt testimony to the progress which religion has made, and is making, amongst us, especially in the higher, and even the highest ranks of society.

At a period, therefore, abounding and advancing in almost every kind of religious improvement, she may be thought by those who would be looking for congratulation rather than caution, to have imposed on herself an invidious task, in choosing to dwell less on the triumphs of Christianity than on the dangers or the errors of some of its professors. Yet she is persuaded that they who have made the greatest proficiency in piety will be the most ready to forgive the intimations, of which they stand in the least need.

It may, however, justly be said, that the writer might have found more appropriate objects of censure amongst the worldly and the irreligious, than in the more respectable classes whom she has taken the liberty to make the subject of animad-

version. But the truth is, the thoughtless and the profligate have been so successively and so perseveringly attacked by far more powerful pens; have been so long assailed by the monitory maxims of the moralist, pelted by the missile weapons of the satirist, and chastised by the grave rebuke of the divine; that, with due deference, she turns over the hitherto incorrigible to stronger and more efficient hands; while she ventures to address her observations to other quarters, where there will be more hope of forgiveness, and less despair of success.

She does not therefore appeal to those who "hear not Moses and the Prophets," but rather to those who, hearing, neglect them; and especially to those who, in some awful instances, misrepresent them. She presumes, with respect and diffidence, to expostulate with some, who, though exempt from palpable defects in practice, yet require to be reminded that speculative errors cannot be indulged without danger; and to intimate to others, that the practice may be faulty where there are no material errors in the creed. Doubtless indifference to religion will hereafter be more severely judged, than mistakes in it, especially if the latter be found to proceed from the head, as the other more apparently does from the heart.

The remarks in the early part of this volume, on the excess of continental intercourse, will probably be accused of blamable scrupulosity, and the writer be charged with unnecessary rigour. Yet

what enlightened conscience will deny that some of the habits to which allusion is made militate as much against the self-denying spirit of our religion as more ostensible faults? They would not, however, have been noticed, had they been confined to trifling and common characters; but the least error that grows into a habit, and that habit sanctioned by the countenance of the worthy and respectable, becomes more important than even the vices of ordinary men or frivolous women. In lamenting the probably injurious consequences to a large proportion of the myriads who are still, with unabated eagerness, crowding to a foreign shore, the author is fully persuaded that many amongst them carry out principles too deeply rooted to be shaken by unprofitable intercourse, and morals too correct to be infected by the fascinations of pleasure. But who will deny that the countenance of those who escape the injury gives an authority to those who receive it? In this view the wisest and most correct of our emigrants may, by lending themselves to the practice, furnish, in the result, an apology for things which they themselves disapprove; and thus their example may be pleaded, as favouring what they would be amongst the last to tolerate.

That long and frequent absences from our home, and especially from our country, are not favourable to the mind, is but too visible in that spirit of restlessness acquired by so many who have *repeatedly* made the experiment. For it is observable that the desire once indulged, instead

of being cooled is inflamed; inclination becomes voracity. Appetite has grown with indulgence. And is it not to be feared that the sober scenes of domestic, and especially of rural life, will continue to appear more and more insipid in proportion to the frequency with which they are deserted? Will not successive and protracted carnivals convert the quiet scenes of home enjoyment into what the poet calls "a lenten entertainment?"

Home is at once the scene of repose and of activity. A country gentleman of rank and fortune is the sun of a little system, the movements of which his influence controls. It is at home that he feels his real importance, his usefulness, and his dignity. Each diminishes in proportion to the distance he wanders from his proper orbit. The old English gentry kept up the reverence and secured the attachment of their dependants by living among them. Personal affection was maintained by the presence of the benefactor. Subordination had a visible head. Whereas, obedience to a master they do not see savours too much of allegiance to a foreign power.

We know that the Roman hero, who transgressed the boundaries of his own province by *once* crossing the Rubicon, changed the whole condition, circumstances, constitution, and character of his country. May not the reiterated passage of the Straits of Dover eventually produce moral changes not less important?

The mischiefs effected by these incessant migrations may, indeed, be slow, but they are pro-

gressive. Principles which would revolt at the idea of any sudden change are melted down by the gradual relaxation of continued contact. Complacency in the soothing enjoyment creeps on by almost imperceptible advances. The revolution is not the less certain, because it is not acknowledged. The conscience, too, is quieted by the geographical anodyne — "I would not do in England what I think it no harm to do in Paris."

Might not a fair practical appeal be made to the different state of the feelings of many of our travellers, on witnessing the open violation of the sanctity of the *first* Sunday, and the *twentieth* repetition of the same abuse? Who can affirm, that familiarity has not gradually diminished the alarm, and in a good measure suppressed the indignation? Who will assert that this succession of desecrated Sabbaths has produced no alteration in the state of their feelings, except that of reconciling them to the practice? They, indeed, who had made such a proficiency in religion as to maintain an unabated sense of the evil, would be the least likely unnecessarily to expose their principles to such a risk.*

For the bold remarks on this dangerous and delicate subject, the culprit throws herself on the

* Some friends of the writer, men of the first respectability, who during the late war commanded volunteer corps, have acknowledged to her, that when first called out to drill on Sundays, their religious feelings were most painfully wounded, but long habit made it gradually become a matter of indifference to them.

mercy and the anglicism of her readers; on the courtesy of those, whose kindness she hopes will not be forfeited, by her having shown herself too exclusively an Englishwoman. Anxious, perhaps to a fault, for the welfare, the honour, the prosperity, the character of this Queen of Islands, she yet believes that there are to be found worse prejudices than those national attachments which in her are irreclaimable.*

It is not, however, to be conceded, that the term *prejudice*, so frequently applied to these attachments, is, by this application, legitimately used. If prejudice, in its true definition, signifies prepossession, judgment formed beforehand, fondness adopted previously to knowledge, notions cherished without enquiry, opinions taken up and acted upon without examination, — if these be its real significations, and what lexicographer will deny that they are? then how can this term be applied to the more enlightened Britons? How can it be applied to men who, independently of the natural fondness for the soil, and all the objects which endear it; who, in addition to this instinctive attachment, feel, acknowledge, and enjoy, in their native country, all the substantial blessings which make life worth living for; — a constitution, the best that mortal man has ever yet

* These prefatory apologies for the offences of a subsequent chapter will, it is to be feared, remind the reader of the prudent sinner mentioned by Luther, who in going to purchase indulgences for the faults he had *already* committed, purchased another for a fault he *intended* to commit.

devised; a religion, above the powers of man indeed to conceive, but reformed and carried to perfection by his agency, taught by the wisdom of God, led by the guidance of his word, and the direction of his spirit; a system of civil and religious liberty, which while certain miscreants at home are labouring to destroy, under the pretence of improving, some foreign countries are imitating and all are envying; institutions which promise to convey the chief of these blessings to the remotest lands; — if all these assertions are true, let it be again asked, whether, if an intimate knowledge, and a long enjoyment of these blessings, should have produced a filial fondness for such a country, that attachment can be denominated *prejudice*, a word which, let it be repeated, was only meant to express blind zeal, neglected examination, and contented ignorance?

May not this growing attachment for foreign manners, by wearing out domestic attachments, create a powerful preponderance in the opposite scale? The English partialities being cured, may not those who shall have conquered them become more satisfied with their acquired than with their former tastes; may they not fancy, that they are grown more candid, when, perhaps, they are only become less conscientious? When the mind is softened down by pleasurable sensations, pleased with every thing about it, it becomes pleased with itself; begins to look back on its former scrupulous character with present triumph, rejoices in its enlargement from its previous narrowness; con-

gratulates itself on its acquired liberality; calls what was firmness bigotry; until, to the altered character, the strictness it carried abroad appears rigour on its return home.

That the attraction may be inviting, and the temptation considerable, is readily allowed; but if once the rightness of an action should come to be determined by its pleasantness, an entirely new system of morals must be introduced amongst Christians; the question then would be no longer, what *ought* we to do, but what should we *like* to do? That the temptation is not irresistible appears in the self-denial of those who continue to withstand it: many who have felt the desire have prudently deferred its gratification to a safer season; while others continue to doubt its *general* expediency.

That many among our innumerable travellers have gone abroad on the reasonable ground of health, as well as for the necessary purposes of business, is not to be doubted. And who will deny that some men of great ability and high principle have gone with the meritorious desire of doing moral and religious good, in various directions; and that they have, in no inconsiderable degree, effected it, or at least have opened a door for further improvement? On the other hand, the disgraceful truth must not be concealed, that others have carried out more evil from home than they found abroad.

It would be uncharitable and unchristian, to desire to maintain a spirit of hostility between near

neighbours; but when neighbours have been so frequently on the alert to find pretences for disagreement, and national safety has sometimes been endangered by the quarrels of individuals, will not good neighbourhood be more probably promoted by friendly dispositions and mutual good offices on the respective shores, than by obtrusive visits, which, if they were thoroughly liked, would doubtless be more frequently returned?

For is it not worthy of remark, that we only refuse to imitate our continental neighbours in the very point in which they are really respectable? *They stay at home.* Even if they do so with the same proud self-preference, which made ancient Rome call all the other nations of the world barbarians, it is at least an honest and a patriotic partiality. Would not the natives of our happy land, who have less to gain and more to lose, do well to follow their example in this honourable instance? *They* prudently augment the resources of their country in two ways, by spending their own money in their own land, with the additional profit of holding out to us those allurements which cause ours to be spent there also.

"O England! model to thy inward greatness,
Like little body with a mighty heart!
What might'st thou do that honour bids thee do,
Were all thy children kind and natural!
But see, thy fault France hath in thee found out."

SHAKSPEARE.

While the pen is in the hand of the writer, fresh intelligence is brought of conspiracies forming in

different parts of the kingdom for its moral and political destruction. Can she, therefore, forbear repeating, that if her degenerate sons betray her, and her honourable sons desert her, her perils are indeed imminent?

At her advanced age the writer has little to hope from praise, or little to fear from censure, except as her views may have been in a right or a wrong direction. She has felt that a renewed attention to growing errors is a duty on those who have the good of mankind at heart. The more nearly her time approaches for her leaving the world, there is a sense in which she feels herself more strongly interested in it; she means in an increasing anxiety for its improvement; for its advance in all that is right in principle, and virtuous in action. And as the events and experience of every day convince her, that there is no true virtue which is not founded in religion, and no true religion which is not maintained by PRAYER, she hopes to be forgiven, if, with declining years and faculties, yet with increasing earnestness, from increasing conviction of its value, she once more ventures to impress this last, important topic, on their attention.

If, then, she has enlarged even to diffuseness on the subject of prayer, it is because she is fervently desirous to suggest it, as the surest counteractive of those many aberrations of heart and practice but too visible amongst us. In some former publications, however, she had expatiated so largely on this inexhaustible topic, that, in order to avoid repetition, she has chiefly limited her present observ-

ations on prayer to the errors which may prevent its efficacy, together with allusions to certain classes of character in whom these errors most abound.

In taking her final leave of her readers, may she be allowed to express her gratitude for their long and unwearied indulgence; for a patience which the too frequent demands made on it could not exhaust; for their candour in forgiving her bold remonstrances; for their kindness in bearing with her faults in consideration of her desire to be useful; and for extending to one who had nothing to offer but right intentions, that favour to which merit might have put in a fairer claim.

Barley Wood,
July 24th, 1819.

SKETCHES

OF

FOREIGN MANNERS.

FOREIGN ASSOCIATION.

We had fervently hoped, during a war, unparalleled in duration and severity, that if ever the blessing of peace should be restored, all would be well again: we had hoped, that at least we should be brought back to our previous situation, with that improvement in humility and gratitude, which the remembrance of past sufferings, and recent deliverance from those sufferings would seem naturally to produce. If our pleasant feelings in such a prospective event were shaded at all, it was simply by the irreparable and individual loss of a father, son, or brother, which almost every family, of every rank, had sustained. Peace was at length providentially granted to our arms and to our prayers; but all the blessings we had anticipated did not return in her train:

> Ease still recants
> Vows made in pain, as violent and void.

Were it not almost doubtful whether in some respects the change may have proved a benefit, if

it should be found to be the choice between the two evils, the waste of human lives, or the decay of moral principles? Some scrupulous persons may even think it requires no very correct arithmetic to determine on the comparative value of perishable lives and immortal souls.

What then was the first use we made of a benefit so earnestly implored, — a blessing which we fondly flattered ourselves would be converted to so many salutary purposes? This peace, for which so many prayers were offered, so many fasts appointed; — this peace, whose return was celebrated by thanksgivings in every church, and, as we hope, in every house, and in every heart, to what purpose was its restoration devoted?

This peace was seized on, not as a means to repair, in some measure, the ravages which were made on the commerce, the property, the comforts, as well as the population of our country; but must it not, in many instances, be said truly, though most painfully said, to vary their nature, and enhance their malignity? Instead of sedulously employing it to raise us to our former situation by a prudent restriction in our indulgences, by an increased residence in our respective districts, and an endeavour to lighten the difficulties of government, by the continued contribution of its rightful supplies; — instead of using it to mitigate the distresses, and to restrain the crimes of the lower orders, by living in the midst of them, each at his natural and appropriate station, and thus neutralising a spirit of disaffection, which took advantage only of their

absence to break out; — instead of improving its opportunities, or providing against the impending scarcity, which the desertion of the rich increased almost to famine; by giving employment to the industrious, relief to the sick, and bread to the famished; — instead of each sentinel remaining at his providentially-appointed watch, — at this critical moment, a very large proportion of our nobles and gentry, and an indefinite number of our laity, and not a few of our clergy, that important part of the community, of which the situation is peculiarly local, — all these, as if simultaneously seized by that mania which, in fabulous history, is said to have sent *one* unfortunate object of divine persecution wandering through the world, — all these important portions of our country at once abandoned it. The only use they made of peace was to fly, with most unrighteous speed, to the authors of our calamities, and of such calamities as it might be thought could not at once have been forgotten; to visit a country which had filled our own with widows and orphans, which had made the rest of Europe a scene of desolation.

Not only hundreds of thousands of our country, men, and women, and children, but millions of our money, so severely wanted at home, were transported from every port to visit this lately execrated country. To *visit*, did I say? that had been little; — a short excursion to feed the eye, and gratify the taste with pictures and statues, might have been pleaded as a natural temptation.

Here we conceive the grave Christian moralist

will censure the writer, as much as she censures the emigrants. He will say, "The desire is too natural to be right." If we plead in mitigation of damages, that it was innocent curiosity, we shall be told, that it was a curiosity which one of our first parents believed innocent, but which lost them both Paradise. If it was a desire of knowledge, it might be a knowledge better unknown; if to cure those prejudices, "for which our country is a name so dear," such prejudices may better be retained than cured.

But be this as it may, the truth is, that to multitudes France was not made a place of a visit, but a home. For when these wonderful productions of art were restored to the places from whence they had been feloniously taken, did that allay the hunger of emigration? France became the settled residence of multitudes. France was made a chosen scene for the education of English, of Protestant children! Sons and daughters, even in the middle ranks of life, were transported thither with an eagerness, as if the land of blood had been the land of promise. And as all fashions descend, not a few of our once simple, plain-hearted English yeomen were drawn in to follow the example of *their betters*, as they are not very correctly called. The infection became general, nor has time as yet stayed the plague.

A late French wit *, who always preferred a calumny to a fact, and was more fond of giving a neat turn to a sentence than of speaking truth,

* Voltaire.

after visiting this country about the middle of the last century, characterised its natives by saying, the English people resembled their own beer, the top was all froth, the bottom all dregs, but the middle was excellent. If this were at that time true, the middle class has now merged its distinctive character in the other two; it is abandoning the honourable station in the cup which it then held, is adopting its worst ingredients from above and below; and by its mixture with the froth and the feculence, has considerably lessened its claim to its once distinct commendation.*

But the evil, great as it is, does not end here; numbers of a higher strain remain domiciliated in France, and too many who are returned are more than ever assimilated with French manners. It is to be feared, that with French habits, French principles may be imported. French alliances are contracted, as almost every newspaper records; and an innovation which had hitherto been firmly resisted, a French theatre is established. We are losing our national character. The deterioration is by many thought already visible. In a few years, if things proceed in their present course, or rather with increasing velocity — which is always the case with downward tendencies — the strong and discriminating features of the English heart and mind

* It is almost too ludicrous to assert, that the wife of a reputable farmer being asked lately what she had done with her daughter, replied, "I have *Frenched* her and *musicked* her, and shall now carry her to France."

will be obliterated, and we shall be lost in the undistinguished mass.

In the mean time, let us take warning from the consideration that the first stage of decline is the beginning of dissolution. Whatever has begun already to decay, is not far from perishing. This contagious intercourse has been, too probably, the cause of the recent multiplication of those great Sunday entertainments, in the diminution of which we had begun to rejoice: a multiplication which is as likely to contribute to the decline of religion in the domestic arrangements of the great, as any more obvious and ostensible evil.

What would the veteran moralist, who, in his beautiful and vigorous satire, indignantly exclaimed,

> I cannot bear a French metropolis; —

what would Johnson have said had he been spared till now?

> How would he laugh at Britain's modern tribe,
> Dart the keen taunt, and edge the piercing gibe!

How would he have poured out his ready wrath, his cutting sarcasm, his powerful reasoning, his robust morality, on a country which is in danger of deserting its own character, impairing its own virtue, and discrediting its own religion! If the muse of a brother bard wept so pathetically the then imaginary distresses of the *Deserted Village*, what a plaintive descant would he have sung on a deserted *Country!*

We set a just value on the French language as the introduction to much elegant literature; to much, indeed, that is valuable, but to more that is pernicious. But even this agreeable language, for the higher acquisition of which so many important sacrifices are made, so much domestic duty is relinquished, so much religious principle is hazarded, may be bought too dear. Even if this supreme excellence, the perfection of the Parisian accent, *should* obtain for an English lady the coveted distinction of being taken for a Frenchwoman; does she not run some risk, even in her own country and her own home, from the habit of domesticating in our families persons of whom all she may know is, that their accent is good; of whose morals she knows little; and of whose religion she knows nothing, except that, if they happen by great chance to have any, it is of a character hostile to her own. The only hope is, that the foreign teacher may care so little about the matter as never to introduce religion at all; but this is not a very consoling consideration in the instructors of our children.

There is another grievance connected with this mania for whatever is foreign — a grievance not the less serious because it is overlooked, and because it affects only a subordinate class in society; — we allude to the injury sustained by our domestic manufactures from the abundant importation of French articles of dress and decoration. We forbear to enter on the subject in all its painful extent; we forbear to advert to the looms that are standing

still, to the gloominess of our trading streets, to the warehouses that are left solitary, to the shops which are nearly deserted; and shall confine our humble remonstrances to pleading more particularly the distress of those unfortunate females who used to procure a decent support by their own industry, and of whom thousands are now plunging into misery. We would fervently but respectfully advocate the cause of this meritorious and most pitiable class.

If British patriotism be not a plea sufficiently powerful to restrain a temptation which can only be indulged by the violation of laws, which, perhaps, the husbands and fathers of the fair offenders have established, we would appeal to the sensibilities of a well-regulated heart, to the tenderness of an enlightened conscience, and to the dictates of justice and of charity, whether it be pardonable to yield to every slight temptation, merely to gratify vanity, or, to speak more tenderly, to indulge a capricious taste.

When tempted to make the alluring purchase by the superior beauty, real or imaginary, of the article, might we not presume to recommend to every lady to put some such questions as the following to herself: — "By this gratification, illicitly obtained, I not only offend against human laws but against humanity itself; by this purchase I am, perhaps, starving some unfortunate young creature of my own sex, who gained her daily bread by weaving her lace or braiding her straw. I am driving her to that extremity of want which may make her

yield to the next temptation to vice, which may drive her to the first sinful means that may offer of procuring a scanty, precarious, and miserable support. It is in vain that I may have, perhaps, subscribed for her being taught better principles at school, that I have, perhaps, assisted in paying for her acquisition of her little trade, if, by crushing that trade, I now drive her to despair, if I throw her on a temptation which may overcome those better principles she acquired through my means. Shall I not then make this paltry — this no sacrifice? Shall I not obtain a victory over this petty allurement, whose consequences, when I first gave way to it, I did not perceive?"

The distress here described is not a picture drawn by the imagination, a touch of sentimentalism, to exhibit feeling, and to excite it. It is a plain and simple representation of the state of multitudes of young women, who, having been bred to no other means of gaining their support, will, probably, if these fail, throw themselves into the very jaws of destruction. Think, then, with tenderness, on these thousands of young persons of your own sex, whom a little self-denial on your part might restore to comfort — might snatch from ruin. Many ladies, who make these unlawful purchases, do not want feeling, they only want consideration. Consider, then, we once more beseech you, consider, that it is not merely their bread, but their virtue, of which you may be unintentionally depriving them; and you will find, that your error is

by no means so inconsiderable as it may hitherto have appeared to you.

If the superiority of the foreign purchase you are about to make be not great, you have gained little or nothing by your fault; if it is, and you forego it, you have gained a victory over your own inclination — the victory of an honest principle over a misleading fancy.

Spare yourself, then, the pain of feeling that, if you hear of any of these unfortunate beings having, previously to their entering on other sinful courses, been tempted by famine to commit a robbery, — spare yourself the pain of reflecting that you, perhaps, by a thoughtless gratification of your taste, first robbed her of that subsistence, the failure of which has driven her to a crime she abhorred. The evil which appeared little, considered by itself, considered in its possible consequences, is of no small magnitude..

But to return. — It was from the land of polished arts that ancient Rome imported the poison of her sturdy morals, the annihilation of her masculine character. England has a palladium for her protection, which Ilium, which Rome, never possessed. Yet on that guardian genius depended, as the people thought, the safety of the former; of the latter, it was considered as the destiny. Our palladium is the CHRISTIAN, the PROTESTANT RELIGION. It cannot be taken by storm; but, like that of Ilium, it may be taken by stratagem. The French are to us as much more formidable than the Greeks were to Rome, as we have more to

lose. While our guardian genius remains inclosed within our walls we shall be safe, in spite of wars and revolutions: if we neglect it, like the besieged city of antiquity, we fall: losing our religion, we lose all with it. Religion is our compass, the only instrument for directing and determining our course; and though it will not save the trouble of working the vessel, nor diminish the vigilance of guarding against rocks and shoals, yet it constantly points to that star which, by ascertaining our course, insures our safety.

In making our country an island, Divine Providence seems to have made a provision for our happiness as well as for our security. As that circumstance has protected us from the sword, it should also protect us from the manners of our continental neighbours. The more England labours to resemble them, the more she will lose of her independent character. *Le goût du terroir* is often mentioned as the distinctive mark of the country which produces certain wines. The British character, we hope, will always retain its indigenous flavour.

But if Britain, blest by Heaven above all the nations, ancient or modern, recorded in the annals of history, sacred or profane, has not made the most of all the advantages bestowed on her; if she has not yet made the best use of that elevation on which Divine Providence has placed her; if she has not yet applied to the best possible ends the rich gifts with which He has endowed her; nor turned the provision made for her happiness to the

best account: if, standing on the loftiest summit of naval, military, and literary glory; if, favoured with the best civil and religious constitution the wit of man has yet devised; if, with all these advantages, she has yet some steps to ascend before she reach the height to which the Almighty seems to have destined her, let her remember, she has resources within herself, by which, with the blessing of Him who conferred them, she may still set an example to all the kingdoms of the earth. We will not say she may acquire a superiority over other nations — of that she has long been in possession: — no; we must not try her by her comparative, but her positive, merit; not by placing her in juxta-position with other countries, but with the possibilities of her own excellence.

Britain, we repeat, has abundant resources. If it be true that she has lately, in any respect, gone back, rather than advanced; if, when her public character has reached its zenith, her private character is in any thing deteriorated, she has still within herself all the materials of moral renovation; ample means, not only of recovering what has been lost, but of rising to heights yet unattained. It is only to be wished that she may use these resources, and consider them as raw materials, that will not produce their effect without being industriously worked up.

If the familiar and protracted intercourse with a neighbouring nation; if, during this intercourse, the long-witnessed contempt of religion, morbid insensibility to morals, violated Sabbaths, and

abandonment to amusements the most frivolous, to pleasures knit in one eternal dance; — if all this should happily have left unimpared, or have only tinctured, too slightly to make a lasting impression, the noble simplicity, the ancient rectitude, the sound sense, and the native modesty which have long been the characteristics of the British people; if the growth at home, and within our own doors, of an intolerant and superstitious church, be not too fondly fostered — be not promoted instead of tolerated; if the paramount fondness in too many of the more delicate sex, for unbounded dissipation, for profane and immoral writers, should decline; if the middle classes among us should return to their ancient sobriety and domestic habits; should cease to vie with the great in expensive dress, and the decorations of high life; should cease to give their daughters the same useless accomplishments, which are carried too far even in the highest station, and in theirs are preposterous; if the instruction we are at length giving to the poor be as conscientiously conducted as it is generally adopted, and the art of reading be made the vehicle of true religion; if a judicious correction of our criminal code, and a prudent rectification of the demands of pauperism, be successfully followed up; if the African slave-trade should be effectually abolished — not in promises, and on paper, but in very deed and act; if our prisons be made places of reform instead of increased corruption; if the young offenders be so instructed that they come not out as bad as the old, and the old come

not out worse than they went in; if our venerable universities should fulfil the promise they give of becoming as distinguished for moral discipline and strict religion as they have ever been, and they are now more than ever, unrivalled for learning and ability of every kind; if churches be as readily attended as they will be cheerfully provided; if there be the same honourable attention paid to filling the pulpits as to raising the buildings; if the Bible be as generally read by the giver as it is liberally bestowed on the receiver; if the good old practice of family prayer should be revived, and public worship more carefully attended by those who give the law to fashion; if those who are "the makers of manners" will adopt none but such as deserve to be imitated: — if all these improvements should take place, and which of them, let me ask, is impossible? — then, though we laugh to scorn the preposterous notion of human perfectibility, we shall yet have a right to expect that England, so far from being satisfied to excel other nations, will not only excel her present self, but be continually advancing in the scale of Christian perfection.

FRENCH OPINION OF ENGLISH SOCIETY.

THE French nation have lately had many opportunities for forming their opinion of the English. It may be worth our while to consider what opinion they *have* formed; since by ascertaining their present judgment of the English character, we may form some instructive conclusions as to the change their tuition is likely to effect in it.

Foreigners are of opinion that we want polish. If this were all, we should rather blame their discernment, or their deficiency in fair deduction. For grant us that we are solid, and we have high authority for saying that solid bodies take the brightest polish. And if in point of fact the English character, like the English oak, be susceptible of no inconsiderable polish, it is owing in both to the inherent soundness and firmness of its substance. Soft bodies admit of little polish: in them, therefore, recourse is had to varnish, which hides all flaws; and the thicker it is applied, the more surely it conceals the meanness of the materials beneath its surface.

A late brilliant female writer *, whose genius it would be a reflection on our own taste not to admire, and on our own candour not to extol, has, towards the end of her admirable posthumous

* Madame de Staël.

work, done, in general, noble justice to the English character. She had talents to appreciate, and opportunities to examine it, in its highest condition, and most advantageous forms. It must be observed, that we here presume to touch on no part of her able delineation of English habits and manners, but only so far as private society and conversation are concerned. On these points we are to look for her exceptions: though on the society of the gentlemen she animadverts with the most flattering consideration; and even to that of the ladies she makes a frequent and generous, but not very successful, effort to be civil.

However, with all the politeness and good nature of this fine writer, two qualities which she seems to have possessed in no ordinary degree, it frequently escapes her, that she found the English ladies deplorably deficient in those shining talents and airy graces which embellish society. Had her visit to London been three or four years later, she might possibly have found, in some quarters, stronger marks of improvement in this talent so near her heart; at least if any expectation might be formed from their subsequent intercourse with the society of Paris, the charms of which she never fails to exhibit in those glowing colours which she so well knows how to lay on, even on the worst ground.

But this eloquent panegyrist of animated conversation seems to be a little mistaken in some of the causes to which she ascribes the heaviness of London parties. She laments with deeper concern

than the occasion, even had it been real, seems to require, that the great English gentlemen regularly retire, and spend nine months in the year on their estates in the country! We wish she had happened to mention in what quarter of the kingdom this annual retreat is made, where this voluntary exile *to* the native home is to be found.

We say voluntary, for British gentlemen are not *rélegués* from our capital, as ex-ministers and discarded favourites used to be from Paris. Neither the fate, nor the credit, nor the liberty, nor the choice of habitation of a man of rank in this country, depends on the favour of an arbitrary king; nor does his happiness, his general acceptance, nor his respectability, hang on the smiles of a despotic and capricious master. And if her concern be excessive for the annual voluntary banishment of our men of taste from the centre of social delights, which she would wish to see converted into a circle "never ending, still beginning;" had this lady never further heard of such places as Bath, or Tunbridge, or Brighton, or any other of those numberless felicitous resources, those supplemental relaxations, those by-reliefs of the *ennui* of retreat, which always stand ready to intercept the speed of the fashionable exile, and to break the fall between the London and the country home?

But if even the fact were as desperate as she intimates, the self-imposed relegation would not be likely to produce the effect she deprecates. This lady, born herself to excel in polished society, regrets this injurious retreat, chiefly because it

interrupts the brilliant intercourse of the metropolis, and causes conversation to suffer so tedious and melancholy a suspension. Now we should almost as soon have expected that a philosopher would have imagined a supernumerary eclipse of the sun for the same period, and then have brought it to account for the late dreariness of the natural world, and the inclemency of the seasons.

She laments that the manner in which these absentees from the source and centre of intellectual enjoyment spend their time in the country not a little disqualifies them for the charms of society. With all due deference to this able reasoner, from whom it is hazardous to differ, we should have really thought, that the long leisure for reading, which this supposed solitude must afford, would in some instances prove as favourable to reading and study, as she represents it to be to indolence, sleeping, and drinking. Surely, in the number of those gentlemen, who are all scholars by education, there will be found many who will avail themselves of such opportunity of becoming studious from taste. Thus instead of starving the intellect, would not this leisure rather serve to nourish it; and, instead of lowering the mind, furnish it with fresh images, enrich it with new ideas, and aided by the refreshment of "short retirement urging sweet return," dispose it to repair with a full mind, additional spirit, replenished resources, and increased energy, to that more splendid society which she deems the life of life; that feast of intellect, of which the writer of

these pages is fully disposed to acknowledge the pleasure and the profit? — Those to whom she alludes, who only hunt, and loll, and drink, and sleep at their country seats, are not, we presume, of that race of active intellect, who would swell the flow of soul by their contributions, were they even tied as closely and constantly to the metropolis as the tavern-waiter who draws their corks, or the more respectable purveyor who supplies the market with their luxuries.

As we presume that there is at this time at least as much genius, and taste, and literature, at home as in any capital abroad, consequently there can be no deficiency of the finest materials for enriching and embellishing society, were their possessors a little more disposed to imitate a neighbouring nation in one talent, in which they must be allowed to excel all others — the talent *se faire valoir.*

There is more sterling weight than show in the genuine English character; and Mr. Addison was not the only one of his countrymen who, with respect to intellectual wealth, could draw for a thousand pounds, though he may not always have a guinea in his pocket. But if they are not incessantly producing all they are worth to every comer; when called out in public situations, in the senate, the pulpit, or at the bar, we see all the energies of genius in all its opulence and variety. We see the most powerful reasoning, adorned by the most persuasive eloquence. With these ample materials for conversation, they are not, perhaps,

driven like some of their more volatile neighbours, to talk for the sake of talking. Talking is not, with Englishmen, so completely a *besoin*, so entirely a natural necessity. They are more disposed to consider conversation as the refreshment than the pabulum of life. Added to this, their professional and laborious duties abroad may make some of them frequently consider society as a scene in which rather to repose their minds than to keep them in full exercise. They let them take an easy and natural turn, instead of lashing them up for exhibition.

Learning, in this country, is not confined to academicians, authors, and professional men. There is scarcely a man of fortune in the kingdom, who, if he be not actually learned, has not, however, been bred to learning. The effect of that high institution, brought from the halls and bowers of our distinguished seats of learning, is generally diffused: it serves to fill and adorn the stations of dignity, honour, and utility, of public, as well as to grace the shade and raise the tone of private, life. So that an illiterate gentleman is more rarely to be met with in this country than in any other in the world. When a learned dignitary of our church enquired of one of the French emigrant clergy, who took refuge in England, if he understood Greek, he coolly replied, "*Monsieur, nous avons un professeur!*" — English gentlemen have not yet acquired the art of understanding Greek by proxy.

But to return to the other sex. — Our only fear

on this subject is, lest they should not always remain what the writer in question represents them as being at present. If, indeed, we were sent into this world only to be entertaining; if we had nothing to do but to talk, nothing to aim at but to shine, nothing to covet but admiration; we should more readily coincide in opinion with this sprightly lady.

A great ancient has pronounced silence to be no unimportant art in society, and points, in a particular instance, at one man, as the wisest in an enlightened assembly, because he knew how to hold his tongue. If there had not been many discreet imitators of this taciturn orator in the London parties, what a diminution would it have been in the number of this lady's delighted auditors, and what a lessening of their own gratification in enjoying the exhibition of her superlative talents!

There are, indeed, very frequently, sounder causes for being silent than deficiency of talent, or lack of information; and how happily would the multitude of idle talkers be diminished, if they never opened their mouths, but when they had something to say. The writer in question ascribes to causes, which appear quite new, the reserve and insipidity of the English ladies, when she says, that the true motive is the fear of ridicule; and that as they are not called upon to enliven conversation, they are more struck with the danger of talking than with the inconvenience of silence. She then, somewhat unaccountably, goes on to

attribute the frigidity of their society to the dread of newspapers; and conjectures, that because they do not delight in political warfare, they keep themselves back as much as possible in the presence of others. We did not know that English ladies were either so political or so discreet, or that vivacity and the graces were such heavy losers from these unsuspected causes. Perhaps this lady did not know that the English educate, or rather *did once* educate, women of fashion for *home*. A man of sense will desire to find in his domestic associate good taste, general information, and a correct judgment. In the course of their literary pursuits and conversation together, he will take pleasure in refining and improving her mind; but he would not delight in a wife who will be always introducing subjects for debate, who will be always disputing the palm of victory. Competition and emulation do not contain the elements of domestic happiness. He married for a companion, not for a competitor. Rivalry is no great promoter of affection; nor does superiority in wit always confer superiority in happiness. A professed female wit, like a professed devotee to music, will be soon weary of wasting her talent on her husband; and even he, though he might like such an occasional display in a visit to the house of his friend, will find other talents wanting in a constant home-companion; talents which will not only embellish but improve society; qualities which will eclipse wit and outlive beauty.

We do not find that those brilliant French

women, who had spoiled this sprightly writer for English society, reserved their wit for the entertainment of their husbands, or their learning for the instruction of their families. Their most graceful ethic and courtly poet, who had the best opportunities of ascertaining the real value of professed wits in society, has given his estimate in a single line: —

" Diseurs de bons mots, fades caractères ! "

Among other deductions from brilliant society in England, this lively writer laments an evil, which, if things proceed as they have now begun, we fear may not always remain a subject of lamentation, as coquetry is, in her recipe-book, the flavour which gives to society its poignancy; and this zest she complains is not to be found in England, except in the unmarried! If, however, the growing imitation of French manners should hereafter add this new savour to the real accomplishments of English ladies, their fathers and husbands may not think it the most desirable finishing. She accounts for the fondness of our ladies for foreign travel in a manner not the most flattering to their purity, by supposing it to arise as much from the desire of escaping from the restraint on their manners, as from the influence of the fogs on their constitutions.

She is at no loss to know the true cause of a fact, which we are entirely indebted to her sagacity for discovering at all, namely, why *the disgust of life* seizes on those women who are confined to

these inanimate societies. Certainly this explanation admits the following preliminary question: — Are the movers in these lifeless circles disgusted with their existence? By the way, we do not quite understand whether by *le dégout de la vie* she means a dislike to company, or a taste for suicide.

But let us do justice to her who has, in most respects, done ample justice to our country. If she is a little sickened with the moody taciturnity, and unassuming manners of our ladies, she graciously redeems their characters by making them a full allowance of the more solid virtues: she acknowledges that sincerity and truth form the basis of their conversation, even where all the graces are wanting. It is somewhat doubtful, however, whether she would not willingly have relinquished the actual, in exchange for the absent, qualities.

While we continue to preserve, or rather to improve in, this only true foundation of Christian intercourse, we will less regret the want of its embellishments; and while reserve is protection, and delicacy security, we will console ourselves under these minor evils, which are considered as so cruelly detracting from the fascinations of polished society.

Lord Chesterfield, who adorned conversation by his wit as much as he impaired it by his principles, has defined "politeness to be the art of pleasing." Saint Paul, one of the few writers with whom this accomplished peer was not acquainted, recommends, with as much warmth as his lordship, the duty of pleasing our neighbour. But here the

two moralists part. The noble writer would have us please others to benefit ourselves. All his precepts originate, proceed, and terminate in that one object — self. The Christian writer directs us to "please others for their good," their highest good, their moral "edification." The essence of the worldly code of ethics is selfishness; that of the Christian is disinterestedness.

There is a generosity in Christian intercourse the very reverse of that little and narrowing spirit ascribed to it by those who do not know, or do not love it. It cannot be otherwise; for are not those who cultivate it ever the followers of Him whose sublime characteristic it was — "that he pleased not himself?"

In the society of Christians, every man does not so much look on his own things as on the things of others. Christians do not make conversation a theatre for dispute or display. They consider it as a reciprocation of benignity; a desire to draw out the talents of those who with more merit have less pretension. An interchange of sentiment between intellectual and highly principled persons confers both pleasure and benefit. To make it at once pleasant and profitable, there must be an accordance of principle, if not of opinion. The conversation will frequently have a tincture of religion, even when the topic under discussion is not religious. Topics purely secular are susceptible of this spirit; and in pious and discreet hands, they will be treated in a way to promote religion without professing it.

True religion keeps the whole man in order, whether he be engaged in business or in company. It sheds its benign influence far beyond its own sphere, and by a reflex light casts a ray on actions or speculations to which it has no immediate reference. The Christian does not go out of his way in search of wit, or embellishment, though he does not refuse them when they naturally present themselves, when they grow out of the subject, and the story is not invented for their forced introduction, nor any sacrifice made of something better than themselves. The Christian uses his talents temperately, seeks not to eclipse the less brilliant; and had much rather not shine at all, than shine at the expense of another. The religious man in society finds means for the exercise of many Christian virtues without descanting on them, — candour, charitable construction, patience with the less enlightened, and temper with the less forbearing, a scrupulous veracity, an inviolable sincerity, a watchful guard against every vain thought and every light expression. He is careful to preserve wit unsullied, gaiety pure, and vivacity correct. He is constantly on the watch to introduce subjects of a higher strain; when the occasion offers, he gladly embraces it, but with a due regard to time, place, and circumstance. Let it be observed we are not here speaking of select society associating for religious improvement, but of the duty of keeping ordinary conversation within the bounds and under the discipline of correct principle.

ENGLISH OPINION OF FRENCH SOCIETY.

It may at first sight be censured as a departure from the general design of these slight pages, to introduce any allusion to the manners of foreign countries, as exhibited in their own journals, memoirs, and letters. But when it is considered how deeply our own manners are now becoming assimilated with theirs, it may not be thought quite irrelevant to the subjects under consideration, to take a cursory view of the habits of society in a neighbouring metropolis, so far as they may be likely to affect and influence those of our own country, avoiding every thing public or political, or general, and confining the few cursory remarks to be made to the fashionable circles of private society.

Paris has long been looked up to by many with admiration, as the centre of all that is brilliant in wit, or fascinating in conversation. In a capital, which before the Revolution was said to contain twenty thousand men of letters, high society was not likely to want eulogists. The extravagant encomiums bestowed on these societies by their own people, and echoed back by ours, may prevent its being thought inexpedient to give a superficial sketch of a few of the leading characters which seem to have set the superiority of the circles

kind of resuscitation of his buried fame, by the only method perhaps by which it could have been raised, — a comparison with the prisoner of St. Helena. But surely to have committed fewer crimes than the man who has committed more than any other man, is not to have attained a very high degree in the scale of moral excellence. Are splendour in decoration and magnificence in expense a mantle broad enough to cover that injustice and those exactions on a plundered people by which they were purchased? The piety of the king's latter days is frequently thrown into the scale against the disorders of his earlier life. But surely the transition from profligacy to persecution is no great improvement in the human character. Were not his false virtues even more destructive than his avowed vices? Did matters take a better turn, when the monarch, by exchanging gross immoralities for the exercise of a superstitious and intolerant religion, indulged himself and his directress in a long and bitter persecution of his own subjects? a persecution accompanied with every act of the most unrelenting cruelty. Exile, proscription, torture, death, were the rewards of four millions of his faithful Protestant subjects! To these rigorous exercises of arbitrary power, he was encouraged and impelled by a woman who had herself been educated in the faith she now endeavoured to exterminate.

What a contrast does the life and character of our late beloved sovereign present! Who does not remember how his piety sustained his own mind,

and his virtues preserved the hearts of his subjects, under dangers the most menacing, difficulties the most trying, the loss of territory the most extensive? Who has forgotten how, under all these alarms, his private character exhibited an edifying example of purity and rectitude; his public conduct, of unshaken firmness, and inviolable integrity?

The hand of God has smitten him; but, to borrow from a distinguished orator the late beautiful allusion to the reverence of the ancients for an oak shivered by lightning, — the stroke which blasted consecrated him.

But to return: — We pass over the intermediate government of "the godless regent trembling at a star," in whose character, in addition to the most disgraceful vices, we see a shocking, but not uncommon, union of the wildest superstition with the most avowed infidelity.

During the reign of the next equally corrupt successor, we have endless records of the state of society among persons in the higher walks of life. These notices are to be found in a multitude of the letters and memoirs of the individuals who were themselves actors and interlocutors in these scenes of familiar life. These fashionable societies are all that come within our present design. Many of these works have preserved the history of characters, principles, and sentiments, which, had they been consigned to eternal oblivion, religion would have had less to mourn, and virtue less to regret.

Many of these writings, for life would be too short, and time ill spent, to peruse them all, are

adorned with elegances of composition, and graces of style, which, had they been devoted to the purposes for which they were given, might have benefited the world as much as they have injured it. Out of all these mischievous but lighter writings, we shall only mention one or two; nor would they have been noticed in a little work of this nature, but for the popularity they have obtained among us, and our dread of that natural progress, the tendency of admiration to produce imitation.

In the Life of Marmontel, written by himself, we have an extraordinary specimen of decorous vice and accredited infamy — of abandoned manners, to which reference is frequently made, at least to the characters which exhibited them, without the slightest feeling of their turpitude. Vices abound, and are revealed without the least apparent suspicion of their guilt. The intimations, indeed, are not repeated in the way of boasting, but look as if the writer did not think that concealment of the vice would raise the character he was eulogising. If there are no offensive descriptions of vicious manners, it seems to be because they were not understood to be vicious; and if gaiety of spirit seems to conceal from the writer the complexion of his own morals, gaiety of style seems almost to make the reader lose sight of the character of the company in which he is passing his time. In fact, the delineation of these characters consists rather in a morbid insensibility to sin, than in an ambitious display of it. The slight veil thrown over corrupt manners by decency of expression seems the effect

of some remains [illegible] taste. It is the [illegible] nated by long habits of [illegible] passions are inflamed [illegible] sensibilities of the [illegible] sensibly loses that [illegible] nicely distinguishes [illegible] but the very existence of the [illegible] vice and virtue. [illegible] liveliness of language [illegible] and others we could [illegible]

Women of [illegible] to whose parties the [illegible] admitted, are named [illegible] not merely of their [illegible] charms of their [illegible] their characters, are the [illegible] gyric. Incidentally, [illegible] as a trifle not requiring [illegible] a circumstance not [illegible] tions, it comes out [illegible] and so panegyrised, [illegible] merce with different [illegible] with the same [illegible] connections with the [illegible] Sobriety, chastity, [illegible] tues, are not thought [illegible] complete their round of perfection. [illegible] heart and life, dereliction of all [illegible] are never brought forward as any [illegible] the all-atoning merit of graces of [illegible] and vivacity of conversation.

Divine Providence seems to have intended advanced age as a season of repose, reflection, and preparation for death; and to have sent its infirmities, sufferings, and debility, as gracious intimations of our approaching change, and with a merciful view of our attaining, by those remembrances, to the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls.

But one of the unhallowed projects on which these accomplished societies seem to have congratulated themselves was in defeating this providential procedure. It was their boasted aim to cheat old age of itself — of its present inconveniences, its decays, and its prospective views, by a more amusing method. They contrived to divert the stage of infirmity into a scene of superinduced gaiety and increased levity. Instead of desiring to invest it with the peaceful attributes of calmness and resignation, they invented the means of making old age lose itself, as it were, in youthful images, not only by indulging in light reading, but loose composition. One of them was so successfully boiled in Medea's kettle, that his eulogist triumphantly tells us he translated Ariosto, and published tales exhibiting pictures of voluptuousness without indecency; and these boasted exploits are adduced as adding fresh laurels to a being on the very verge of eternity!

Hear a celebrated academician immortalise one of the deceased confraternity in his public oration! In illustrating the character of his friend, who died in extreme old age, he describes this period as "a season when ingenious trifling is peculiarly

graceful; a period in which men might give themselves up to levity with the least scruple and the most success. It is in old age," says the orator, "that *the mind is disabused on all subjects, and that a man has a right to jest upon every thing!* It is then that long experience has taught him the art of concealing reason under a veil which may embellish it!" *

Whoever has cast an eye on the lately published letters of Madame du Deffand, — a most unnecessary and unprofitable addition to the late load of similar literary mischiefs, — will have beheld such a picture of the manners even of private and select society, among persons of high rank, science, taste, and literature, as must make him look on these distinctions without envy, when beheld disconnected with those principles which alone render talents estimable.

In the history of this distinguished lady, we find these striking circumstances: they present a melancholy instance how completely, in Paris, at that time, a disregard of all the obligations of duty, all sense of religion, all the charities of domestic virtue, all the purposes of social usefulness, were, on *her* part, perfectly compatible with her being received in the first society. On the part of her associates, all the objections, insurmountable, we trust, in any other place, were there sacrificed to the reigning idol — the fondness for display in conversation, the vanity of eclipsing those who eclipsed others.

* Speech of Condorcet to the Academy, on the death of Monsieur de Tressan.

We see also how little splendid talents contribute to the felicities of the life, or to the virtues of the possessor. We even see that, when not under the control of sound principle, they awfully increase the present capacity for evil, and the responsibility of a future reckoning. Instead of promoting improvement, they carry contamination. In morals, as well as in politics,

"Great power is an achievement of great ill."

Some of these brilliant societies fostered in their bosoms the serpents that were so soon to sting, not only their own country, but all Europe. Here were cherished those academical philosophers, wits, and political economists, who first sounded the alarm for the simultaneous extinction of thrones and altars; who first exhibited the portentous remedies for curing despotism by anarchy, and superstition by atheism; who sowed the first prolific seeds of those revolutionary horrors which so rapidly sprung up into the poisonous tree of liberty, and who hurled their arrows at the God of heaven, and erected on the meditated ruins of his kingdom the temple of the goddess of reason.

Previously to some of Madame du Deffand's numerous intrigues, she had been separated from her husband, on the ground which, it is presumed, the laws of England would not recognise as a lawful impediment — *that "he was a weak and tiresome companion!"* She was extraordinarily acute, but her acuteness, though it was frequently just, was always malicious. It is difficult to say whether

she was more completely deficient in sensibility or principle. She possessed all the qualities which attract, but wanted all those which attach; or rather, she wanted no talent but that of turning those she possessed to a better account. Not possessing the female virtues, she either did not believe in their existence or despised them. If she wanted any vice, it was that of hypocrisy; for she takes little pains to hide qualities which were not fit to be seen.

If she possessed any virtue, it was frankness, which yet was often disfigured by coarseness, and not seldom counteracted by falsehood. She wanted all the good feelings of kindness, affection, and tenderness; and possessed in perfection all the bad ones of ill nature, jealousy, and envy; but her ruling passion was a selfishness the most deeply rooted, and an egotism the most completely unconquerable.

The dark and hollow character, which she takes little pains to conceal, is rendered more broadly conspicuous by the warmth of her colouring, the strength of her language, and the power of her wit, all frequently exercised in proclaiming her own impieties.

It is a striking proof of the unrelenting rancour of her heart, that a friend of the same class of character *, whom she had formerly loved as much as she could love any woman; one who had been her select companion in her own house fifteen years, but who had quitted her in disgust, and set up a *talking house* for herself, which drew away some of

* Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse.

" the best feathers in her wing; " — on hearing the death of this rival lady, she only exclaimed, " I wish she had died many years ago, and then I should not have lost D'Alembert ! "

We learn from her letters, that her splendid society was composed not merely of wits, philosophers, and academicians, but of women of rank, of nobles, and of statesmen, with one of whom she was connected. From those, it must be confessed, admirably written epistles, we profitably learn much of the hollowness of worldly friendships, much of the insincerity of mere wits and mere men of letters, — of persons who associate together, partly for the credit of having it known that they are so associated, — who mix acrimony and adulation, venturing to indemnify themselves for their reciprocal flattery when together, by their cutting sarcasms when separated. Happily, the more we see of these communications, the more we are convinced that nothing but sound principle, " godly sincerity," a conquest over vanity, a triumph over egotism, an habitual struggle against selfishness — can establish an honourable, virtuous, and durable friendship, or shed a benign lustre on the most polished society.

We repeat, that these reports are not industriously gleaned from rival parties, ill-informed journalists, nor even from virtuous writers, eager to expose the vices they detested; but from the principal performers in the scene — chiefly from a woman whose uncontrollable openness prevents her concealing her own vices.

We see, not without pain, her exposure of the faults of some of the associates whom she so sedulously courts, and so constantly abuses; we see the malignity which forces itself through all her endeavours to appear amiable in the eyes of the distinguished person to whom she writes; we see the corroding envy, the gnawing jealousy, and sometimes the obvious aversion to the individuals of a society, without which she cannot exist; which society probably entertained a reciprocal hatred of their flattering hostess, and yet could not exist without *her*. All this factitious fondness exhibits a scene, from which an unsophisticated English heart turns away, sickening with disgust.

This unhappy woman, old, deaf, blind, repining, and impious, drew this accomplished society about her by their mutual fondness for conversation. They met without affection, they parted without regret; yet meet they must — they were necessary to each other, not for comfort, for they knew neither the name nor the thing; but society being an article of the first necessity for the support of existence, it must be had with companions hating, and hated by, each other. Under such circumstances, the fondness for society seems not so much a taste, as a raging appetite.

It is, however, a cheerless, heartless association, where persons of talents and breeding meet, not so much to enjoy each other, as to get rid of themselves. Intimacy without confidence, and intercourse without esteem, add little to the genuine

delights of social life. Competition, while it inflames vanity, is no improver of kindness.

In a city like Paris, where men were wits and authors by profession, and ladies judges and critics by courtesy, nothing was considered as an exclusion from these societies but want of talents to amuse, or taste to decide. The poet produced his work, not, however, so much to be corrected as applauded; not so much to be counselled as flattered; he in return, paying usuriously in the same counterfeit coin, the honour conferred on him, and the benefit done him, by their proclamation of the beauty of his work; his fame, perhaps, suspended on the avowed patronage of a woman whom we, in our plain language, should call infamous. He is grateful to receive his *imprimatur* and his crown of laurel from fair and fashionable, but impure hands; and Paris resounds, next morning, with the immortality assigned him by the decision of this coterie.

All this might be very well, or at least would not be so very bad, if there were no future reckoning; but to see old age without consolation, dreading solitude as only less terrible than death, — to contemplate loss of sight as only augmenting spiritual blindness, yet to see the afflicted sufferer clinging to this miserable existence, and closing a life of sin with an old age without penitence and a death without hope; — to consider talents capable of great things, abused and misapplied, — a God not merely forsaken, but denied; — all these are images from which the sober mind turns away

with horror softened by compassion. May every daughter of Britain say, with the patriarch of old, "Come not into their secret, O my soul; to their assembly let not thine honour be united!"

Some ladies of unimpeached morality were found in these coteries. True; yet we hope to be forgiven for saying, that they could have retained but little of that delicacy which should preserve the purity of society, when they made no scruple of mixing intimately with women whose practices they would not, by any means, adopt. In such society virtue withers, delicacy is impaired, and principle finally extinguished.

In this view it is impossible not to make a short digression, to observe with gratitude on the obligations of English society to our late venerated queen. Not to insist on the admirable example she set in her exact performance of all the domestic duties; her public conduct, in one important instance, will ever reflect honour on her memory —we mean her solicitude to prevent the impure mixtures to which we are now alluding. She raised, as it were, a rampart between vice and virtue; and her strictness in excluding from the royal presence those who had forfeited their claim to be introduced to it, had a general moral effect, by excluding them also from the virtuous society of others of their own rank. Discriminations of this nature are of incalculable value in preserving the distinctions between correctness and impurity, when no offender, though of the highest rank, can

preserve the public dignity of the station she has dishonoured.

> " 'Twas hard, perhaps, on here and there a waif,
> Desirous to return, and not received;
> But was an wholesome rigour in the main,
> And taught th' unblemish'd to preserve with care
> That purity, whose loss was loss of all." COWPER.

London also has had its select assemblies for conversation. They were neither trifling, dull, nor pedantic. If there were less display of wit, less pains to be easy, less study to be natural, less affectation of being unaffected, less effort to be unconstrained, there was more sincerity, integrity, and kindness. If there was a less perpetual aim at being ingenious, ingenuity was never wanting. If there were less persiflage and sarcasm, there was more affection, truth, and nature. Religion, though not discussed, was always venerated, and no degree of rank or talent would have procured an introduction where there was any taint on the reputation.

The tone of social intercourse is at present, perhaps, likely to be raised by the recent adoption of more direct religious improvement in the private parties of some persons of rank and talents. But to return to Paris.

One instance more of the substitution of talent for virtue, and of the little regard paid to the absence of the one where the other abounded; one instance more, and we will relieve our readers, and carry them to breathe a purer atmosphere in better company. The celebrated Madame d'Epi-

nay is described by one of her admirers *, who came in the order of succession next after Rousseau, not only as the most attractive, but most *discreet* of women! This discretion, which is his rather than hers, appears in his making her indulgence in forbidden gratifications consistent with her constant regard for public opinion, and the desire of reputation. He records intentionally to her honour that being above all prejudices herself, (that is, above the weaknesses of Christianity,) yet no one knew better what was due to the prejudices of others. She conformed, he observes, as scrupulously to old usages, as to new opinions, and kept up the outward observances of the church as much as a woman of an ordinary mind could have done; that is, she was at once an infidel and a hypocrite. He proclaims to her glory, that, "without believing in any catechism but that of good sense, she never failed to receive the sacrament, painful as the stupid ceremony was, with the best grace imaginable, as often as decency, or the scruples of her friends, made it becoming." "Perhaps," adds her profane panegyrist, "there was as much greatness in receiving them with *her* notion of them, as there would been in refusing them." Is it any wonder that, with such a conformity of principles, she obtained the prize of the academy, as well as the homage of the academician?

We are amused to think with what a contemptuous smile of pity these ladies, with all their allowed taste and learning, must, if they were

* Le Baron de Grimm.

consistent, have beheld the pictures of those obsolete wives, Andromache and Penelope, as delineated by the Grecian bard — pictures of female excellence and domestic virtue, which have drawn the tear of admiring sympathy from many a British eye. The poet has omitted to mention whether their valiant lords loved them the less for having spent the hours of *their* absence in scenes of bloody warfare or perilous adventure, in mournful solitude, cheating the time in simple occupations, yet such as served to keep up the memory of their beloved heroes; in one, by contriving decorations for a living lord, or in the other, honouring the memory of the dead one, by preparing funeral honours for his father, ingeniously deferring the detested second nuptials by nightly unravelling the daily labour, and thus keeping her promise of consent when the work should be finished, and preserving her fidelity to her lord by never finishing it.

What manly English heart would not prefer the fond anxiety of the Trojan wife, which led her in secret to the watch-tower, to mark the battle, and tenderly seek to explore her husband so soon to bleed, — to all the Aspasias of Greece, to all the Du Deffands, the De l'Espinasses, the D'Epinays, to all the *beau ideal* of the fancy, and all the practical pollutions of the life, of the "*bonnes sociétés*" of the metropolis of France?

But, happily, we need not go back to ransack antiquity for *examples* in the finely-imagined females of Troy or Ithaca, nor for *warnings* to the polished but profligate courtezans of Athens, nor

to the criminal countesses of Paris; — we may find instances of the one, and a complete contrast to the other, nearer home. We need go no further for the highest examples of female dignity, talent, and worth, than to the private biography of our own country.

We could produce no inconsiderable number in the highest rank of women, who, if their names are not blazoned in the book of fame, will be recorded in more lasting characters in the book of life; — who, if their memoirs are not spangled with their *bon mots*, have yet had their good actions and holy principles embalmed in the writings of their faithful Christian friends. But we shall confine ourselves to a very few.

The Lady Mary Armyne, descended from the ancient Earls of Shrewsbury, was eminently skilled in human, but especially in divine, learning. But the remembrance of her talents, which appear to have been of the first order, is lost in that of her Christian virtues. Among numerous other instances of her pious exertions, she contributed largely to the support of a society for converting the Indians in New England, long before missions were thought of by her tardy countrymen. On hearing of the fatal massacre of St. Bartholomew, she instantly devoted a large sum to those exiled and destitute clergymen who had fled hither for protection. Her piety was as exemplary as that extensive benevolence of which it was the source.

In Birch's Life of the Hon. Robert Boyle, there is a most interesting account of Mary, Countess of

Warwick, of whom it is saying every thing to say, that she was entirely worthy of being sister to that illustrious Christian philosopher. Of the eminently pious Lady Frances Hobart, the ornament of the court of James the First, Dr. Collings has preserved an interesting memorial. A long and unwearied attention, for many years, to the bodily sufferings of her lord, could only be surpassed by her anxiety for his spiritual interests. Through the blessing of God, she became the honoured instrument of a total change in his character, who never named her by any other appellation but that of his "dear saint." This term had not then fallen into reproach.

Of Susanna, Countess of Suffolk, it is impossible to say too much. For brevity's sake, however, we must restrict ourselves to one or two particulars in speaking of a life which was a constant series of secret piety and active benevolence. When near her end, which happened in her twenty-second year, she implored of her lord, that, whatever provision might be made for the fortunes or acquirements of her children, they might be educated in the strictest principles of Christianity, in comparison of which she esteemed all worldly accomplishments as nothing. To her dying father, who had been inattentive to Christian duties, she administered such spiritual supports, that in rapture he praised God that he should live to receive his best religious consolations from his own child!

To the memory of the Lady Cutts, the incomparable wife of the gallant Lord Cutts, so dis-

tinguished at the siege of Namur, noble justice has been done in an admirable funeral sermon of Bishop Atterbury, which we would recommend to every reader who has a taste for exalted piety or fine writing.

The Lady Elizabeth Hastings was not less distinguished for superior talents than for eminence in every Christian attainment. She has been celebrated for both in the Tatler, under the very inappropriate appellation of Aspasia. No two characters could form a more perfect contrast.

But the time would fail to enumerate all the English ladies who have conferred honour on their country. Of those already mentioned, all possessed considerable talents. Some were eminent for their skill in the dead languages; others for their knowledge of philosophy and the sciences; all for their high religious attainments. All were practical Christians — all adorned their profession by the strictest attention to the domestic, the relative, and the social duties. *

But what shall we say to Rachael Lady Russell? Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all! She has unintentionally bequeathed us her character in her letters. Though there is little elegance in her style, there is all the dignity of wisdom and all the eloquence of truth in her sentiments. Many specimens of epistolary writing might be produced, which excel these in the graces of composition, but few which surpass

* For a full account of these, and many other equally eminent ladies, see "Memoirs of Pious Women."

them in that strong sense, solid judgment, and those discriminating powers which were the characteristics of her intellectual attainments, as heroic fortitude, Christian humility, unshaken trust in God, and submission to his dispensations, were of her religious character. Such a combination of tenderness the most exquisite, magnanimity the most unaffected, and Christian piety the most practical, have not often met in the same mind.

An acute, but sceptical French writer, calls "Magnanimity the good sense of pride, and the noblest way of obtaining praise." How well has the prince of pagan philosophers, by anticipation, corrected this tinsel phrase! "If thou art not good, thy magnanimity is ridiculous, and worthy of no honour." But how did our sublime Christian sufferer practically improve upon both! "Seek not the honour which cometh from men, but that which cometh from God."

Whether we view this illustrious daughter of the virtuous Southampton taking notes on the public trial of her noble consort, concealing the tender anguish of the wife under the assumed composure of the secretary; — whether we behold her, after his condemnation, prostrate at the feet of the unfeeling monarch, imploring a short reprieve for her adored husband, while the iron-hearted king heard the petition without emotion, and refused it without regret; — whether we behold her sublime composure at their final separation, which drew from her dying lord the confession, "the bitterness of death is past;" — whether we behold her heroic

resolution rather to see him die, than to persuade him to any dishonourable means to preserve his life; — whether we see her superiority to resentment afterwards towards the promoters of his execution, — no expression of an unforgiving spirit; no hard sentence escaping her, even against the savage Jefferies, who pronounced his condemnation, adding insult to cruelty; no triumph when that infamous judge was afterwards disgraced and imprisoned; — if we view her in that more than temperate letter to the king a few days after her dear lord's execution, declaring that, if she were capable of consolation, it would only be that her lord's fame might be preserved in the king's more favourable opinion: — had long habits of voluptuousness left any sense of pity in this corrupt king, or, rather, if a heart had not been forgotten in his anatomy, it must have been touched at her humble entreaty, that "he would grant his pardon to a woman amazed with grief, to the daughter of a man who had served his father in his greatest extremities, and his majesty in his greatest perils:" — if we view this extraordinary sufferer under all these trials, while we admire the woman, we must adore the Divine grace which alone could sustain her under them.

After this imperfect sketch, may we not say, that, for an example of conjugal tenderness, we need not go out of our own country for a perfect model? Portia, swallowing fire because she would not survive her Brutus, the *Pæte non dolet* of the faithful Arria, as she stabbed herself, and then pre-

sented the sword to her husband, to set him an example of dying bravely; these heroic instances of conjugal affection, which have been the admiration of ages, are surpassed by the conduct of Lady Russell: *they* died a voluntary death rather than outlive their husbands; Christianity imposed on *her* the severer duty of surviving hers—of living to suffer calamities scarcely less trying, and to perform duties scarcely less heroic. After weeping herself almost blind, after the loss of her only son the Duke of Bedford, let us view her called to witness the death of her daughter, the Duchess of Rutland. After seeing her dead corpse, let us behold her going to the chamber of her other daughter, the Duchess of Devonshire, then confined in child-bed, of which the other had just died. When her only surviving daughter enquired after her sister, the mother cheerfully replied, "I have just seen her out of bed!"—It was in her coffin!

In whatever attitude, then, we consider the portrait of this illustrious lady, it is with fresh admiration. Each lineament derives additional beauty, from its harmony with the rest, the symmetry of the features corresponding with the just proportions of the whole figure.

ENGLAND'S BEST HOPE.

We have dwelt on the present and the past, as well with reference to our neighbours as ourselves. If we have shown that we have little regret in any still remaining difference between the inhabitants of the opposite shores, and much to fear from a growing resemblance between them; — if we have successfully hinted at the grounds of our own real superiority, and the possibility of maintaining, and even increasing our greatness, to any extent consistent with human imperfection; — if we have, in the two preceding chapters, anticipated what might be our ultimate degradation, whilst in the first we had pointed at the heights to which we may reasonably aspire; — let us not think it unworthy our attention to enquire how we can alone answer our high destination, revive what we have lost, attain what more is within our reach, or, having attained it, how we may perpetuate the inestimable blessing.

We have at length, though with a slow and reluctant movement, begun to provide a national education for the children of the poor. Prejudice held out against it with its accustomed pertinacity, — knowledge would only make them idle, ignorance would preserve subordination, the knowledge of their duty would impede the performance of it. This last we did not perhaps say in so many words, but was it not the principle of our conduct? We put off the instruction of the poor, till the growth

of crime made the rich tremble. We refused to make them better, till they grew so much worse as to augment the difficulty, as to lessen the probability of their reform. The alarm came home to the opulent. They were afraid for their property, for their lives; they were driven to do what it had long been their duty not to have left undone. But they did it not, till "the overflowings of ungodliness made them afraid." They discovered, at length, that ignorance had not made better subjects, better servants, better men. This lesson they might have condescended to learn sooner from the Irish rebels, from the French revolutionists. We have at length done well, though we have done it reluctantly. We have begun to instruct the poor in the knowledge of religion.

But there is another class, a class surely of no minor importance, from whom too many still withhold the same blessing. If, as is the public opinion, it is the force of temptation which has produced so much crime among the poor, are not the rich, and especially the children of the rich, exposed to at least as strong temptations, not indeed to steal, but to violate other commandments of equal authority? Laws, without manners, will not do all we expect from them; manners, without religion, will be but imperfectly reformed. And who will say that religious reformation will be complete whilst it is chiefly confined to a single class, or deemed at least a work of supererogation by some among the higher ranks? There are, however,

many honourable exceptions, the number of which is, we trust, increasing.

Why should the poor monopolise our benevolence? Why should the rich, in this one instance, be so disinterested? Why should not the same charity be extended to the children of the opulent and the great? Why should the son of the nobleman not share the advantage now bestowed on the children of his servant, of his workman, of the poorest of his neighbours? Why should not Christian instruction be made a prominent article in the education of those who are to govern and to legislate, as well as of those who are to work and to serve? Why are these most important beings, the very beings in this enlightened country whose immortal interests are the most neglected?

The Apostle tells us, that "he who provides not for his own house has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." If this be true of temporal, what shall be said of him who neglects to make "for his own" a spiritual provision? Does not he far more emphatically deny "that faith" which is violated even in the other inferior case?

If we have begun to instruct the poor with a view to check the spirit of insubordination, that spirit requires little less suppression in our own families. In all ranks it is the prevailing evil of the present day. The diminished obedience of children to parents, of servants to masters, of subjects to sovereigns, all spring from one common root — an abatement of reverence for the authority of God.

unless it be so conducted as to leave no time for its cultivation, unless it cause them to consider religion as an object of inferior regard. But no human learning ought to keep religious instruction in the back-ground, so as to render it an incidental, a subordinate part, in the education of a Christian gentleman.

Some apology might be made for the natives of a neighbouring kingdom for their contempt of religion, from the load of absurd and superstitious observances which degrade it. Though even *they* might have discovered, under these disadvantages, much that is good: for they have had writers who yield to none in elevation of sentiment, in loftiness of genius, and sublimity of devotion. * Yet the labours of these excellent men have left the character of their religion unaltered.

But *we* have no such excuse to plead for the contempt or neglect of religion. Here Christianity presents herself to us neither dishonoured, degraded, nor disfigured. Here she is set before us in all her original purity; we see her in her

* What has been said here and elsewhere of France, and of the religion of France, has been said "more in sorrow than in anger," and with the single view of caution to our own country. However we deprecate the past, we still cherish the hope, that having witnessed the horrors of a political, we may one day hail the dawn of a moral revolution. A virtuous king, and an improving government, leave us not without hope that this fair portion of the globe may yet rise in those essentials without which a country can never be *truly* great. May they eventually improve in "that righteousness which alone exalteth a nation!"

whole consistent character, in all her fair and just proportions, as she came from the hands of her Divine Author. We see her as she has been completely rescued from that encumbering load under which she had so long groaned; delivered from her heavy bondage, by the labours of our blessed reformers, and handed down to us unmutilated and undefaced.

If every English gentleman did but seriously reflect, how much the future moral prosperity of his country depended on the education he may at this moment be giving to his son, even if his paternal feelings did not stimulate his zealous endeavours, his patriotic would.

May the unworthy writer, who loves her country with an ardour which the superior worth of that country justifies; who, during a long life, has anxiously watched its alternations of prosperous and adverse fortune; and who, on the very verge of eternity, is proportionally anxious for its moral prosperity, as she approaches nearer to that state, in view of which all temporal considerations diminish in their value; — may she hope that her egotism will be forgiven, and her pardon be obtained for the liberty she is taking? May she venture to suppose that she is now conversing with some individual father of a family in the higher ranks of life, and presuming that he would permit the freedom, address him, and through him, every man of rank and fortune in the kingdom, in plain and bold language, with something like the following suggestions: —

Let it be your principal concern to train up your son in the fear of God. Make this fear, which is not only "the beginning of wisdom" in point of excellence, the same also in priority of time. Let the beginning of wisdom be made the beginning of education. Imbue the youthful mind betimes with correct tastes, sound principles, good affections, and right habits. Consider that the tastes, principles, affections, and habits, he now forms, are to be the elements of his future character; the fountain of honourable actions, the germ of whatever may hereafter be pure, virtuous, lovely, and of good report.

In his education, never lose sight of this great truth, that irreligion is the death of all that is graceful and amiable in the human mind; the destruction of all moral beauty. Its foundations are in the dust, and it is a vain attempt to hope to raise a noble superstructure on so mean and despicable a basis. Tell him, that the irreligious man never looks out of self. He is his own centre; all his views are low: he has no conception of any thing that is lofty in virtue, or sublime in feeling. How should he? He does not look to God as the model of perfection. He will act nothing that is holy, for he does not honour *his* commands; he will conceive nothing that is great, for he does not look to the Archetype of greatness; there is no image of true grandeur in his soul. His mind will be reduced to the narrowness of the things to which it is familiarised, and stoop to the littleness of the objects about which it is conversant. His

views will not be noble, because they are not excursive; they are confined, imprisoned, limed, entangled in earth and its concerns; they never expatiate in the boundless regions of immortality. He has no connecting link between himself and things

" Beyond this visible diurnal sphere."

His soul is cramped in the exercise of all its noblest faculties; his heart paralysed in its best attempts after a fugitive, meagre, low-minded virtue.

There is no true elevation of soul but what the youth must acquire by the knowledge of God as revealed in his word; no perfect example but that exhibited to him in the character of his Divine Son; nothing but the Gospel, through the grace of God, will check his corruptions, give him a sense of his accountableness, and raise his nature above the degraded state to which sin has reduced it.

It is material to reflect that nothing really preparative to his well-being in this life, and conducive to his qualification as an ornament to his country, will otherwise than forward him in his progress for another country, " even a heavenly." Adopt the the measures which even nature and reason suggest for making him a distinguished member of human society, and it will not lessen your satisfaction, nor lower your gratitude, when you see that you have not only trained him to be a useful and virtuous citizen, but also a candidate for heaven.

Let your child be made familiarly acquainted with God's word, his providence, his controlling power, his superintending eye. Let him be taught not barely to read, but to understand, to love, to venerate, his Bible. If he be not early made familiar with its dialect as well as its doctrine, he may hereafter learn to undervalue its truths from a fastidious dislike to its venerable phraseology. Implant, at a proper season, in his mind the evidences of Christianity, in the clearest, simplest, and most explicit manner. Furnish him with arguments to defend it; for he will not fail to hear it attacked. Teach him to despise ridicule, that last resort of the bad defender of a bad cause; for he will find that those who cannot argue can sneer, and he may feel it harder to withstand the one than the other.

Inform him that in France it was the ignorance of religion which produced the contempt of it; and that both together overturned the state, by inculcating principles hostile to all virtue, fostering passions destructive of all order, and an impatience of control subversive of all government: all springing from one common source, all meeting in one common centre — a combination to throw off the government of God himself. Impress upon his young mind that important truth, that there can be no security for a *state* in which religion is not warmly yet wisely taught by its ministers, cherished by its government, and believed and reverenced by the people.

There are certain traditional sayings which claim

a sort of prescriptive right to be received, which pass unexamined, and are credited as oracular. Guard him against these false and sordid, but popular maxims, which, though the phrases may be used chiefly by the lower orders, the things themselves are practically adopted, pretty equally, by "the great vulgar and the small." Some vindicate speculatively loose principles, by the assertion that "thoughts are free." Tell your son this is not true: a Christian must endeavour to bring his thoughts to the same correct standard with his actions, and from the same awful motive, "Thou, God, seest!"

There is another popular but unfounded axiom respecting the use of wealth, namely, that "a man may do what he will with his own." Christianity denies this assertion also. Every man has, indeed, a legal right to the disposal of his own property, but religion interdicts his right to spend it in vanity or vice; or if he be exempt from these grosser temptations, she still abridges his right to monopolise it. Christianity expects that the deserving and the distressed shall come in for such a proportion of his wealth as an enlightened conscience shall dictate. The Divine Person who refused, in a legal sense, to be "a divider or a judge," over a contested property, did not fail to graft on the question he avoided answering the imperative caution, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness."

There is another fatal lesson which he will learn in the world, and which the natural pride of his

own heart will second; namely, that to resent an injury is a mark of spirit, while to forgive it shows a base mind. The prince of darkness, in his long catalogue of expedients, never invented a maxim which has brought more generous, but ill-disciplined souls to destruction.

The uncurbed desires, the unrestrained passions, to which we have before adverted, the contempt of submission, the supposed meanness of forbearance, the hot resentments not controlled betimes in the boy, may have been preparing the man for an act which may hereafter fill his whole life with cureless remorse.

Boys well born, and accustomed to well-bred society, have a sort of instinctive notion of *honour*, which is strengthened by the conversation to which they are sometimes exposed. Seize upon this spirit, whether instinctive or contracted, but seize it with a view to convert it to higher purposes. This popular notion of honour may seem to give dignity to the tone of his conversation, while it is inflating his heart with arrogance. It may, indeed, set him above doing an act which some fashionable men may agree to call base, but it will not preserve him from a duel, which these same men agree to call honourable. But whatever acquittal a jury of the world's men of honour may pronounce on such a transaction, it will, by that awful decision from which there lies no appeal, by the definitive sentence of the great Judge of quick and dead, be pronounced murder; — murder of one of the combatants in the act, of both in the intention; murder

as criminal as that which brings its vulgar perpetrator on the highway to his ignominious catastrophe. There is not, perhaps, a more hopeless crime than the last act of the duellist: he seeks out his own executioner, precipitates himself uncalled into the presence of his Judge, and not only the last desire of his heart, but the last effort of his hand, is revenge.

Lay hold, then, on this high-minded feeling, and endeavour to direct it into a purer channel. Lead his aspiring mind to higher objects. Let the hope of the favour, and the dread of the displeasure, of God, expel from his heart a too eager desire to court the applause, or escape the censure, of irreligious men, by acts which, while they would offend his Maker, would destroy his own soul. Let him learn to distinguish between the swellings of human arrogance and the consciousness of Christian dignity. Worldly maxims of honour are tumid, but they are not great.

There is no sure preservation from these mischiefs but in an education formed on the religion of Jesus Christ. The principles drawn from the spirit of the Gospel, conscientiously adopted and acted upon, would subvert all the hollow and destructive maxims of the worldly code. How many boiling passions might have been cooled, how many disappointed hearts and mourning spirits healed, how many duels, how many suicides (both now so dreadfully prevalent), might have been prevented, by the early and unremitted application of this one grand specific!

Cultivate in your son whatever is valuable in science or elegant in literature. Independently of its own intrinsic worth, it will, by filling up his time and engaging his thoughts, assist in setting his mind above low and sordid tastes, and leave him little leisure or relish for the base and grovelling pursuits of sensuality. A love of learning, judiciously instilled, is amongst the most probable *human* preservatives from vulgar vice; though, since it is human, it can go but certain lengths as to moral benefit; and we have witnessed many deplorable instances of its failure, in minds of the highest literary attainments, for want of being under the direction of a superior principle. It is, however, a most valuable auxiliary, not only in improving the intellect and refining the taste, but, as we have already observed, in rescuing so much leisure from inferior pursuits.

But learning, be it repeated, though it invigorates the mind, will not reform it. It is a shining ornament, but not of the nature of a corrective. Moral evil is not cured, is not regulated; nay, it might even be inflamed by it, where intellectual science is made its own end, and not considered subservient to a higher. Learning will strongly teach him to despise what is worthless in composition, but will feebly lift him above what is unworthy in practice. It will correct his taste, but will not enable him to resist temptation: it will improve his judgment of the world, but will not secure him from its pollutions. Human learning

will only teach him the knowledge of others, the Bible that of himself.

Let him, therefore, enter into the battle of the world armed with weapons from the divine armoury; stoutly furnished with motives and arguments drawn from religion, of potency to fortify his resolutions, convince his understanding, and affect his heart. Let him see in your own example, that religion is neither unmanly nor ungentlemanly. Accustom him not to hear the three dominant spiritual and intellectual sins, PRIDE, SELFISHNESS, and EGOTISM, treated with an indulgence not shown to such as are more disreputable, gross, and scandalous. Against both classes the whole artillery of the Gospel is impartially levelled. Of the first, peculiar condemnation is intimated in Scripture. Of pride it is observed, that "God resisteth the proud," and that it is hard to be found "fighting against God." Against selfishness it is specifically proclaimed that "no man" with any pretensions to a Christian character "liveth to himself;" that we are not to "seek our own things," and that we must "bear one another's burdens." Against egotism a host of precepts present themselves in battle array, — "to esteem others better than ourselves; to avoid vain glory; to look on the things of others; to be slow to speak, ready to hear."

Though these interior and mental sins are as much cherished by impiety as those which are coarser and more notorious, yet as the latter can produce no plausible pretence for their indulgence; as they cannot be qualified by any sophistry, nor

covered by any artifice, they are less likely to hold out to the end. Morality is disgusted by vulgar vice, by the practical sins of the sensual man; but mere morality can never extirpate the vices of the heart and mind: it is not always her aim, nor if it were, could she accomplish it.

In your conversation with the young person do not be satisfied to *generalise* religion. Religion is an indefinite term, a vague word, which may be made to involve a variety of meanings, and to amalgamate a number of discrepancies. It may release a man from all the prescribed institutions of Christianity; it may set him loose from all its peculiar doctrines and restraints; turn him adrift, and dismiss him to his choice between the "Jehovah, Jove, or Lord" of the sceptical poet. Since life and immortality have been brought to light by the Gospel, a *general* religion is no religion at all. His must be the religion of the New Testament. Be not ashamed to teach your son the Gospel of Jesus Christ. If you believe that there is no other name under heaven by which yourself can be saved, you must be assured that there is no other salvation for your son. Be careful not to use ambiguous language, or words of doubtful interpretation, which may lower, or do away, or keep out of sight, the great doctrine of the influences of the Holy Spirit — a doctrine not less accommodated to our wants than that of the atonement is to our sins. Delay not too long to communicate to him these distinctive peculiarities of our faith. Other notions will occupy the space which you leave va-

cant. Oh! stamp the right impressions on his heart while it is soft, tender, and ductile; and he will hereafter mix these early imbibed feelings, and sentiments, and principles, with his other sweet associations, his other pleasing recollections of the vernal season of life: cherished images! which the matured mind is fond of retracing, and which commonly remain vivid when most others have faded or are obliterated.

Fancy not that these acquisitions and pursuits will blight the opening buds of youthful gaiety; that they will check his vivacity, or obstruct his amiable cheerfulness. The ingenuous, unvitiated mind is never so happy as when in a state of virtuous exertion, as when engaged about some object to which it must *look up*; something which, kindling its energies, raises its views; something which excites the noble ambition of lifting it above itself.

Much less fear that the pursuits here recommended will depress his genius; they will exalt it: his mind will find wider room in which to expand; his horizon will be more extensive; his intellectual eye will take in a wider range; the whole man will have an ampler region in which to expatiate. To know that he is formed for immortality is not likely to contract his ideas or to shorten his views. It is irreligion which shrinks and shrivels up the faculties, by debasing the spirit and degrading the soul.

And if to know that he is an immortal being will exalt his ideas, to know that he is an accountable being will correct his habits. — If to know that "God *is*" will raise his thoughts and desires

to all that is perfect, fair, and good,—to know, that "God is the rewarder of all them that seek Him," will stimulate him in the race of Christian duty;—to know that there is a day in which God will judge the world, will quicken his preparation for that day.

As he advances in age and knowledge, impress upon his mind, that in that day of awful inquisition, he must stand unconnected, single, naked! It is not the best attachments he may have formed, the most valuable societies to which he may have belonged, that will then stand him in any stead. He must, therefore, join them now with a pure and simple intention; he must not seek them as something on which to lean, as something with which to share his responsibility;—this is his own single, undivided concern. It is vain to hope that by belonging to any society, however good, to any party, however honourable, he can shrink from his own personal, individual accountableness. The union of the labourers gives no claim to the division of the responsibility. In this world, we may be most useful among bodies of men; in the great judgment, we must stand alone. We assist them here, but they cannot answer for us hereafter.

From his Bible, and from his Bible only, let him draw his sense of those principles, of that standard by which he will hereafter be judged; and be careful ever to distinguish in his mind between the worldly morality which he may learn from the multitude, and that Christian holiness which is the dictate of the Scriptures, and of the

Scriptures alone. Teach him to discover there, — he cannot discover it too soon, — that it is not a set of proverbial moral maxims, a few random good actions, decorous and inoffensive manners, the effect of natural feeling, of fashion, of custom, of regard to health, of desire of reputation, that will make a truly valuable character. This is not to be acquired by certain popular virtues, or rather fractions of virtues; for there is no integral virtue where there is no religion. Pleasing manners will attract popular regard; and worldly motives will produce popular actions: but genuine virtue proceeds only from Christian principles. The one is efflorescence, the other is fruit.

After all, though you cannot by your best exertions, seconded by the most fervent prayer, — without which exertion will neither be rightly directed nor successfully prosecuted, — command success; yet what a support will it be under the possible defeat of your fairest hopes, that you strove to avert it! Even if, through the prevalence of temptation, the perverseness of his own nature, and the malignity of his corruptions, the barbarous son *should* disappoint the best founded hopes of the careful parent; what a heartfelt consolation would it afford you, under this heaviest of all trials, that the misconduct of the child is not imputable to the neglect of the father! The severest evil — and this perhaps is the most severe — is supportable, when not aggravated by the consciousness that we have contributed to bring it upon ourselves. Though it will not pluck the

sting from his guilt, it will render the poignancy of your own anguish more tolerable.

But let us indulge higher hopes and brighter prospects for our country. We refer to those hopes with which the first chapter of this little work concluded; namely, the rich provision which God has put into our hands for accomplishing his great designs in our favour. The hope there expressed, and the means humbly suggested for accomplishing it, was the reformation of the British character. We have here, feebly indeed, but honestly, shown what obviously appears to be the best security, the most effectual barrier against the vices and contamination of our prolonged continental intercourse. Religious education, with God's blessing upon it, which every truly Christian father will not fail to invoke, is all in all towards the restoration, the elevation, the preservation of our national character. And let it never be forgotten, that it is the education of the rich which must finally determine the fate, at once of rich and poor; and, by consequence, which must determine the destiny of our country.

Here then is Britain's last best hope; and when we consider the unparalleled advantages we possess in a learned and orthodox clergy, who instruct us in the sanctuary, and who preside over our public and private seminaries, why need we despair? Why need we doubt, that the Christian religion, grafted on the substantial stock of the genuine British character, and watered by the dews of heaven, may bring forth the noblest productions of

which this lower world is capable; though neither the security nor the triumph will be complete till these "trees of righteousness" are transplanted into the paradise of God?

Reader, if you are indeed a Christian father, anticipate in idea that triumphant moment, when, having cast your crown at the foot of the eternal throne, you shall be called upon to give an account of your own conduct, and, as far as had depended on you, of that of your offspring! Think of the multiplied felicities of meeting, in the presence of God, those whom your example and instruction have, through his grace, contributed to bring thither! Think what it will be, to be able, amidst all the hosts of heaven, amidst the innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect; — think of being able to say to the Universal Father, "Behold, I and the children whom thou hast given me!"

ON

DOMESTIC ERRORS

IN OPINION AND IN CERTAIN PRACTICAL HABITS.

ON SOUNDNESS IN JUDGMENT, AND CONSISTENCY IN CONDUCT.

As a preliminary to the following pages, the writer begs leave to observe, that they consist rather of miscellaneous observations on a variety of topics, than in an attempt at a systematic view of religion or morals. She does not pretend to present an exhibition of Christian doctrine or to prescribe the duties of a Christian life. It is presumed that the generality of readers who shall honour these pages with their attention are already, in a greater or less degree, religious characters; consequently, standing in little need of such information as her humble talents could have imparted. But as religion is become a subject of increasing and more general interest, it may not be unseasonable, as we proceed, to point out some of the dangers to which the less advanced Christian may be liable, as well as some of the evils which may subsist with a high outward profession. To those who are beginning to see the importance

of religion — and of such persons, adored be Almighty goodness! the number is rapidly augmenting; — to those interesting characters may the writer venture to address a few words of affectionate and respectful counsel.

Carefully encourage the first dawning dispositions of piety in your heart, cherish every indication of a change in your views, and an improvement in your sentiments. Let not the world, nor the things of the world, stifle the new-born principle, nor make you ashamed modestly to avow it.

But while you cultivate this principle by every possible means, avoid the danger of fancying that your religion is confirmed when it is scarcely begun. Do not conclude that a complete change has been effected in your heart because there is a revolution in your opinions, and a favourable alteration in your feelings. The formation of a Christian character is not the work of a day; not only are the views to be changed, but the habits to be new moulded; not only is the heart to be convinced of sin, but its propensities are to be bent into a contrary direction. Be not impatient, therefore, to make a public disclosure of your sentiments. Religion is an interior concern. Try yourselves, prove yourselves, examine yourselves, distrust yourselves. Seek counsel of wise, established, sober Christians. Pray earnestly for more light and knowledge, and especially for perseverance. Pray that you may be able to go on with the same zeal with which you set out. Of how many may it be said, "Ye did run well —

what hindered you?" You ran too fast; your speed exhausted your strength; — you had not counted the cost.

Carefully distinguish between the feverish heat of animal fervour and the vital warmth of Christian feeling. Mere youthful energy, operating upon a newly awakened remorse for a thoughtless life, will carry the mind certain lengths; but if unaccompanied with humility, repentance, and a continual application for a better strength than your own, this slight resource will soon fail. It is not that principle which will encourage progress; it is not that Divine support which will carry you on to the end. The Christian race is not to be run at a heat: religion is a steady, progressive course; it gains strength by going, and eventually it gains speed also: progress quickens the pace; for the nearer the approach to the goal, the more ardent is the desire to reach it. And though, in your further advance, you may imagine yourself not so near as you did when your first set out, this is not really the case; — you have a lower opinion of your state, because you have obtained higher views of the spirituality of the law of God, and a more humbling sense of your own unworthiness. Even the almost Christian prophet seems not to have been previously so deeply convinced of sin, as when, overwhelmed by the glory of the Divine vision, he exclaimed, "Mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts!"

The person who addresses you has seen some promising characters sadly disappoint the hopes

which their early stages in religion had excited. By taking too high a tone at first, they not only lost all the ground they had gained, but sunk into indifference themselves, accompanied with a prejudice against serious piety in others. They not only became deserters, but went over to the enemy's camp. Avoid their error. The world is too much disposed to impute rashness, presumption, and enthusiasm to the purest and most correct religious characters. In your instance let them not be furnished with any ground for this censure by your deserving it. If you advance, you glorify God, and promote your own salvation; if you recede, you injure the cause you now intend to serve, and bring upon yourselves a fearful condemnation. Self-abasement, self-examination, and prayer, are the best preservatives for all who have entered on a religious life, and are especially becoming in incipient Christians.

There is one thing we would more particularly press on the important class we are now taking the liberty to address; — *it is the cultivation of a sound judgment.* Of all persons, religious persons are most bound to cultivate this precious faculty. We see how highly the great apostle of the Gentiles valued it. In directing the spiritual labours of his beloved young friend, in stirring him up to every good word and work, he does not forget this exhortation: — "*The Lord give thee a right understanding in all things!*" Again, he prays for his beloved Philippians, "that their love may abound more and more in *knowledge*

and in all *judgment.*" And in his Epistle to the youthful bishop of Crete, he repeats the admonition to young persons of both sexes to be *sober-minded.* These admonitions acquire great additional force when it is considered, that he who gave them was a man of exceeding ardency of temper, and of zeal without a parallel. This experienced saint must have frequently seen the danger of imprudent piety, of self-confidence, of a zeal not regulated by knowledge; and therefore presses the great importance of a *sound judgment.*

Judgment is to the faculties of the mind what charity is to the virtues of the heart; as without charity the latter are of little worth, so without judgment talents are of little comparative use.

Judgment, with the aid of God's spirit, and the instructions of his word, is the balance in which qualities are weighed, by which the proportions of our duties, and the harmony of our virtues, are preserved; for it keeps not only the talents in just subordination, but the principles in due equipoise. When exercised in subservience to the Divine rule, the faculty becomes a virtue, and a virtue of a high order. It restrains irregularity, it subdues vanity, it corrects impetuosity, it checks enthusiasm, and it checks it without diminishing zeal.

One of the most powerful defenders, not only of our church polity but of our church doctrines, has had the renown of all his great qualities so absorbed in the quality we are recommending; or, rather, this was so much the faculty which maintained his great talents and qualities in their due

order, that we never read the name of Hooker without the previous application of this weighty epithet, — THE JUDICIOUS.

Judgment is so far from being a cooler of zeal, as some suppose, that it increases its effect by directing its movements; and a warm heart will always produce more extensive, because more lasting, good, when conducted by a cool head.

We speak of this attribute the more positively, because it is one which, more than many others, depends on ourselves. A sound judgment, indeed, is equally bestowed with other blessings by Him from whom cometh every good gift; yet it is not, like the other faculties of the mind, so much born with us, as improved by us. By teaching us to discern the faults of others, it warns us to avoid them; by detecting our own, it leads to their cure. The deepest humility is generally connected with the soundest judgment. The judicious Christian is watchful against speculative errors, as well as against errors in conduct. He never adopts any opinion because it is new, nor any practice because it is fashionable; neither does he, if it be innocent, reject the latter merely for that reason. Judgment is, in short, that quality of the mind which requires to be kept in ever-wakeful activity; and the advantages it procures us, and the evils from which it preserves us, will be more apparent the more it is kept in exercise.

Religious charity more especially demands the full exercise of the judgment. A judicious Christian will double the good done, by his selection of

the object, and by his manner of relieving it. All things that are good are not equally good. A sound judgment discriminates between the value of the claimants which present themselves, and bestows on them more or less attention, according to their respective claims.

Above all, an enlightened judgment will enable you to attain and to preserve CONSISTENCY, that infallible criterion of a highly-finished Christian character, the want of which makes some really religious persons not a little vulnerable. It was this want in some of his people, which led an eminent divine, at once a man of deep piety and lively wit, to say, that "there were some good persons with whom it would be time enough to be acquainted in heaven." So much to be regretted is it that goodness of intention is not always attended by propriety in the execution.

In another class, the want of consistency makes not a few appear over scrupulous as to some minor points, and lax in others of more importance. These incongruities not only bring the individual into discredit, but religion into disgrace. When the world sees persons, whose views are far from high, act more consistently with *their* avowed views, and frequently more above them, than some whose religion professes to be of a loftier standard, they will prefer the lower, as exhibiting fewer discrepancies, and less obvious contradictions.

Consistency presents Christianity in her fairest attitude, in all her lovely proportion of figure, and correct symmetry of feature. Consistency is the

beautiful result of all the qualities and graces of a truly religious mind united and brought into action, each individually right, all relatively associated. Where the character is consistent, prejudice cannot ridicule, nor infidelity sneer. It may, indeed, be censured, as holding up a standard above the attainment of the careless. The world may dislike, but it cannot despise it.

In the more advanced Christian, religion may seem to be less prominent in parts of the character, because it is infused into the whole. Like the life-blood, its vital power pervades the entire system; not an action of the life that is not governed by it; not a quality of the mind which does not partake of its spirit. It is diffused through the whole conduct, and sheds its benign influence, not only on the things done, but on the temper of the doer in performing them. The affections now have other objects, the time other duties, the thoughts other employments. There will be more exertion, but with less display; less show, because the principle is become more interior; it will be less obtrusive, because it is more rooted and grounded. There will be more humility, because the heart will have found out its own corruptions.

By the continual exercise of the judgment, and an habitual aim at consistency, the Christian, though animated, will be orderly. He will be less subject to the ebullitions of zeal, as well as to the languors of its decay. Thus, through the joint operation of judgment in the intellect, and principle in the heart, the religion is become equable, regular, consistent.

There never was but one visible exhibition of infallible judgment and complete consistency. In that Divine person who vouchsafed to pitch His tent among us, and to dwell with men on earth, that He might give us a perfect example in His life, before He obtained salvation for us by His death:—In HIM alone was judgment without any shadow of error, consistency without any speck of imperfection. His Divine perfections none can approach; but all may humbly imitate those which come within the compass of His humanity.

ON NOVEL OPINIONS IN RELIGION.

AMONG the numerous innovations of this innovating age, it is deeply to be lamented that religion should come in for so large a portion. Of this we have a melancholy instance in the system of the new secession. Many are distorting the sacred doctrines, and slighting the practical ethics of the New Testament. The religion of the Gospel is employed to furnish arms against itself. The truth, as it is in Jesus, is fearlessly controverted: its sanctity is no security; its Divine authority is no protection.

In the new system — strange to say! the hardihood of the sceptic is adopted for the professed purpose of purifying Christianity. The dogmatism of the unbeliever is employed for improving our faith in the religion which the unbeliever denies!

This heterogeneous system, composed of different elements, made up of conflicting principles, unhappily, is not brought forward by the avowed opposers, but by the professed and zealous friends of Christianity; — by religionists placing themselves much above the standard of their former pious associates, with whom they once went to the house of God as friends; by Christians so critically scrupulous, that they can no longer go to that house at all.

Novelties in the sciences and in the arts may be,

and generally are, beneficial. Every invention may be an improvement; but in religion they are delusions. Genuine Christianity is not, as one class of men seem to suppose, a modern invention; serious piety is no fresh innovation. "That which was from the beginning declare we unto you," are the words of inspiration; the new and living way, therefore, now so much depreciated, is only a continuation in the good old way so long ago recommended by the Prophet.

Nor is Christianity, as the recent party seem to suppose, a superannuated thing, which wants repairing; nor is it an incomplete thing, which wants filling up; nor is it a redundant thing, whose excrescences want lopping; nor a defective thing, whose deficiencies must be supplied; nor an erroneous thing, whose errors must be expunged.

But to do these malecontents justice, they do not resemble those reformers who are contented to expose the defects of an existing system, without providing a remedy. This restoration, this purifying, this repairing, this expunging, this lopping, this grafting, this perfecting, they have actually and gratuitously taken into their own hands, with a view either to improve the old religion, or, as their progress in error rather threatens, to produce a new one; while the champions of the antiquated system all agree that "the old is better."

Some Christians of the primitive ages were not then, perhaps many of the present age are not now, aware, that he who overleaps the truth errs as widely as he who falls short of it; nay, the danger

is even greater, as it is more difficult to recede than to advance. It was the vain desire of overturning established truths, of being wiser than the wisdom of God, of being more perfect than the perfection of the Gospel, of giving new glosses to old opinions, and rejecting all opinions which did not hit their own distempered fancies; together with the temptation of being considered as the founders of a new school, — which gave rise to the Ebionites, the Cerinthians, the Marcionites, and various other sects; and which has continued, to this day, to introduce successive heresies into the church of Christ.

Of the two classes above mentioned, — those who think true religion a novelty, and those who are endeavouring to introduce a novel religion, — though they are the very antipodes of each other, yet it is difficult to determine which has wandered most widely from the truth. Scylla has its wrecks as well as Charybdis. Though each thinks that the only way to safety is to recede as far as possible from the other, yet, by this increasing desire of mutual recession, they are in more danger of gradually approaching to each other, if not of finally meeting, than either intended or believed at first setting out.

In one quarter we hear the most consoling of all doctrines, — the doctrine on which the great hinge of Christianity turns, — rejected as false, and its defenders derided, as if they were adopting it to be a substitute for virtuous practice. We hear one community spoken of by its professors as triumph-

antly bearing away from all others the proud distinction of *rationality*. It is a monopoly not to be allowed. If by rational religion is meant a religion singularly adapted to rational beings, no church on earth has a fairer claim to the appellation than the church of England. It is rational to exercise our reason in examining and weighing the evidences of Christianity; and, having clearly proved the authority on which they are grounded, it is then rational to submit our reason to its doctrines. It is rational to believe that we are apostates from our original brightness; not only because we perceive it to be a scriptural doctrine, but because we see it in all around us, and feel it in all within us.

It is rational for a being, conscious of its weakness, to desire to lean upon something that is strong; we therefore lean upon a rock, and that rock is Christ. Our church is a rational church; for it is sober without coldness, and animated without enthusiasm. Its service unites the affections of the heart with the faculties of the mind; it teaches to pray with the spirit, and with the understanding also. Though it lays hold with a firmly grasping hand on the blessed doctrine of the atonement, yet it is so far from using this doctrine as a pretence for neglecting virtuous practice, that it draws from thence new motives, new sanctions, new encouragements. It teaches, that without shedding of blood there is no remission for sin, while it declares, that, without repentance, and without holiness, there is no salvation for sinners.

The sound members of this church acknow-

ledge that there are mysteries in our religion; but the same reason which employed its best energies in proving the Divine authority of Scripture, has convinced them that the secret things which belong to God must be adored now, and will be fully understood hereafter. The legitimate members of the church, for she has, it is to be feared, some spurious ones, are not surprised, that in a revelation from Heaven there should be mysteries; but they believe that these sacred mysteries are meant as exercises of faith to the probationers for Heaven; are meant to promote humility; which *they* consider, whatever others do, as a grand fundamental in religion. They do not pretend to know in what manner the Holy Spirit operates on the human heart, but they know that it does operate, because it produces that change of heart which they are not ashamed to call the renewing by the Holy Ghost, and which distinguishes the vital from the nominal Christian. They leave to those who have sufficient natural resources in their own minds, if such there be, to reject assistance which *they* fervently implore; assistance without which they, who think they stand, may finally fall.

These humble dependents on Divine grace come at length to attain, in addition to the external evidences of Christianity, an internal evidence in their own bosom, which, so far from giving them any elation of heart, any eccentricity of doctrine, any irregularity of conduct, preserves them from each, while it affords them "all joy and peace in believing."

But while we put in the fair claim of our church to rational religion, we do not make an exclusive pretension to this, or any other excellence. Every human institution bears on it some marks, greater or less, that it is human, of course imperfect; and it is sufficient to guard *us* against the folly of such a pompous assumption to know, that an erroneous church not only assumes the appellation of *infallible* itself, but gives it also to its infirm, mutable, human head, to a being certain of death, and liable to sin.

But if we do not claim soundness as well as rationality, for our exclusive possession, we are more likely to perpetuate both, than the best societies of separatists. All that is good in our church is likely to be secured to it by the fence of an establishment. An enclosure is not so likely to be broken in upon from without, as a society planted in the waste. We are likely, I say, to be secured from the introduction of new dogmas, as well as to be preserved in our long adopted principles. The pale which encircles our church, and the formularies which belong to it, do not leave it open to the experiments of new projectors, to the incursions of fresh innovators. Above all, it is enriched by a great mass of the Divine treasures of Scripture; the spirit of which is also expanded in our collects and prayers, so that, as we have observed in another place, if the pulpit should in any instance unhappily degenerate in doctrine, the desk will still furnish a perpetual antidote. It may, indeed, deserve the name of the *Establishment*, not

only as being the national religion, but as being built on the foundation of the everlasting Gospel, on the doctrines taught by prophets and evangelists, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.

In another of the quarters alluded to, the more novel system, we hear much of opinions but little of practice; much of doctrines, but little of holiness; much of faith — a disproportioned and unproductive faith — but little of repentance. These grand ingredients, which, when severally coupled together, make up the sum and substance of Christianity, — these joint essentials, which St. Paul preached invariably, and which by never separating, he preached effectually, are now considered as separate interests, and severed from each other as having no necessary connection.

We are very far from the injustice of accusing those who propagate doctrines which are evidently unscriptural, of being themselves unholy. In some of the leading characters, we fully believe the contrary to be the case; but the obvious effect of such doctrines on those who hear them, is not only to lessen their value for practical preaching, but to lead them to consider personal holiness as making no part of the things which accompany salvation.

Those who are at all acquainted with ecclesiastical history, must know that in the most flourishing ages of the church, even when Christianity was best understood and most successfully practised, errors of opinion most readily started up, the ephemeral fungus of a luxuriant soil; they were fre-

quently the suggestion of fanciful and mistaken, rather than of immoral men. Our great spiritual adversary, who successfully employs the *vicious* as the corrupters of *morals*, knows it to be a stale and fruitless device to make them his agents for misleading the judgment and bewildering the imagination; and therefore, by a refinement of ingenuity, prompts the more virtuous to the accomplishment of spiritual mischiefs. Moral men are his selected instruments for broaching novel, enticing, and dangerous opinions.

These moral but wayward persons seem to have overlooked the fine supplication of the Apostle, for his converts, that God would "stablish, strengthen, settle them." These terms, which indeed are not synonymes, but shades; — these terms, a noble climax, implying not equality, but gradation, are now inverted. Every move in the new machine seems to shake, weaken, unsettle. One pin in the old system is pulled out after another, till the whole magnificent fabric, if its security depended upon them, would fall to the ground. The patriarch Jacob has shown us, in the character of his vacillating son Reuben, how destructive instability is of excellence.

We are assured that the changes in these ever-varying theories are so frequent that to confute them would be as difficult as unnecessary; for that which by some of the party is insisted on in one week, gives way in the next to some wider deviation; so that he who might wish to animadvert on

some existing evil must be as rapid as its inventor, he must

"Catch ere she change the Cynthia of the minute."

If in religious contemplation or discussion, we once give the reins to fancy, if we cherish every seducing thought, merely because it is new, if we set up for complete independence of opinion, if we assume individual release from all the ties that hold Christian society together, if we permit ourselves to plunge into the unfathomable ocean of discovery, without compass or rudder, there is no saying where we may land; it may be on the shore we now dread. Many of these leaders differ in opinion, but each seems to lay as exclusive a claim to truth as the Pope himself; but as the latter was equally infallible when there was one Pope at Avignon and another at Rome, so the infallibility here seems to be lodged by each in himself, only with this variation, that these last begin by differing from each other, till, in their more advanced progress, they come to differ from themselves.

Is not the recent secession founded on a kind of spiritual democracy, an overturning system; an aversion to whatever is established; a contempt of authority; an impatience of subordination; a thirst for dictatorship? with this difference, that these religious dissidents loose the reins of their self-government, instead of those of their country.

We know to what a degree the love of novelty, the longing to see any thing they have not seen before, though the object be ever so disgusting, is

carried by our countrymen. The poet who best knew human nature, who best painted the characters of Englishmen, said, "In England any monster will *make* (be the making of) a man." This is so true, that a dwarf, a giant, an unnatural birth in an animal, will afford delight; the greater the distortion, the higher the pleasure. We have seen to what excess this passion for what is novel and monstrous may be carried, in the instance of a late preposterous prophetess; a creature born and bred among the dregs of the people, with nothing to recommend her but ignorance, presumption, extravagance, and blasphemy: yet did this woman not only make numberless proselytes among her vulgar equals, but obtained advocates among those from whom better things might have been expected. But it is the very absurdity which is the attraction. Such preposterous pretences being obviously out of the power of human means to accomplish, the extravagance is believed to be supernatural. It is the impossibility which makes the assumed certainty. Men are ready to believe in all wonders except those of which God is the Author. The epilepsy of Mahomet confirmed his claims to inspiration.

Extravagance in religion is a kind of spiritual empiricism, which is sure for a time to lay hold on the vulgar. The ignorant patient in both cases, who frequently pays little attention to the established physician, is sure to be attracted by any new nostrum from the laboratory of the irregular prescriber: he is resorted to with more confidence

in proportion to the reputed violence of his catholicon; and he who despised the sober practitioner, swallows without scruple the most pernicious drug of the advertising professor.

Without the slightest desire to detract from the personal character of our new empirics in divinity, we may be allowed to suspect that their education and early habits of life had not altogether qualified them for the arduous undertaking of new-modelling a church. It is true that "the erudition of a (common) Christian man" is not required to be very profound; but surely that of a Christian reformer should be something more than moderate.

The lapse of three centuries has added little clearness to the lucid exposition of Christian truth as exhibited in the writings of those reformers by whom the doctrines of the Church of England were modelled. Whatever defects might have escaped the notice of those eagle-eyed sifters and examiners of Christian truth, when they rescued it from the rubbish under which it lay almost buried, would not these defects have been detected, pointed out, rectified, by the penetrating mind of Bishop Jewel in his renowned challenge at Paul's Cross, or in his celebrated apology for the Church of England? Would they not have been expunged or purified by the judicious Hooker, that bulwark of the Establishment, in his immortal writings on *ecclesiastical polity*, and on *justification*? Would they have eluded the observation and correction of Archbishop Usher, that prodigy of erudition?

We need not be again told the well-known fact, that there may be abundant learning where there is little enlightened piety; but in these glorious champions of the faith of Christ and of the Protestant church, learning was only a secondary excellence. Various and profound as were their acquirements, they were conscientiously devoted to the purpose of advancing and confirming the scarcely-established church. Can we believe that Ridley, Hooper, Cranmer, and a long list of such distinguished men would have made the sacrifices they actually made without scrupulously examining into the momentous truths they professed to believe; that they would have suffered the most cruel tortures rather than renounce the doctrines of a church to which they were first ornaments and then martyrs? "There were giants in those days:" but to say no more of them, nor of the succession of profound divines and eminent scholars who succeeded them, "men of stature also,"—would it not be casting a severe reflection on these bright luminaries of our country and church, to believe that the great truths of the Gospel, which were hid from these skilful and acute indagators, were reserved to be brought to light by half-a-dozen persons in the nineteenth century;—that to men, most of them bred to secular pursuits, and living antecedently in secular habits, should be reserved the honour of detecting, not trifling faults, not imperfections, from which perhaps no human institution is exempt, but radical errors, but fundamental mischiefs, affecting the very vitals of

our religion? If these evils really exist, if they indeed escaped the penetration, eluded the vigilance, and mocked the wisdom of those mighty champions, then to say those holy men were blamable, is saying little: they were indeed idiots, voluntarily to suffer a violent death, rather than renounce a church too erroneous for the new reformers, not only in which to preach, but in which to remain.

The penetrating genius of Luther seems not only to have exposed all existing, but to have anticipated all future heresies; especially when he inveighs against that which declared that "*The Ten Commandments ought to be taken out of the Church!*"

This Coryphæus of the doctrine of faith, in contradiction to the new system, says: "Faith is by no means an ineffective quality, but possesses so great excellency, that it utterly confounds and destroys all the foolish dreams and imaginations of sophisters: but if works only are taught, faith is lost."—"But if nothing but faith is inculcated, carnal men begin to dream that there is no need of good works." Again: "If, indeed, faith saves us without works, let us have no anxiety about good actions; let us only take care and believe, and we may do what we please. It is true," adds he, "that Paul tells you that faith without works justifies; however he also tells you, that a true faith, after it has justified, does not permit a man to slumber in ignorance, but that it worketh by love." Again: "You now see, that though it is faith

alone which justifies, yet that faith alone is not sufficient."

There is not a single doctrine of the New Testament which does not involve practical consequences. The necessity of holiness, now unhappily not insisted on, is more exalted by the death of Christ than by all other means that ever were devised. God's hatred of sin is more forcibly expressed by the sacrifice of his Son, than it could have been by any other method, although we do not presume to set limits to infinite power. Yet this most glorious doctrine, this cleanser from all sin, may be converted by the manner in which it is administered into an open door to that licentiousness which it is its special design, its obvious tendency, and, when truly received on scripture grounds, its natural consequence, to cure.

But if men come to the perusal of the Bible with certain prepossessions of their own, instead of a simple and sincere desire after divine truth; if, instead of getting their obliquities rectified by trying them by this straight line, they venture to bend the straight line till it fits their own crooked opinions; if they are determined to *make* between them a conformity which they do not *find*, they are not far from concluding that they *have* found it. By such means a very little knowledge, and a great deal of presumption, have been the groundwork of many a novel and pernicious system.

There will, indeed, be as many systems as there are varieties of novel and pernicious opinions; for though men, for a time, are as tenacious of error

as if it were truth, yet the persuasion of error is not likely to be so lasting. As no error can be so irresistible as a known truth, it cannot long carry the same weight with it. He who adopted it, at length finding it not to go, as we say, on all fours, is more likely to plunge into a succession of errors, each deeper than the other, than to return to the truth which he has abandoned; — whether in the pride of not going back, or the hope that, in his wider wanderings, he may extricate himself, it is hard to say; for error is as endless as truth is powerful. Some minds are so constituted, that it is easier to them to produce objections to truth, than to embrace it; they therefore resist truth, when they might resist the obstacles which prevent their receiving it. Our adoption of error as naturally proceeds from our abuse of reason, as our adoption of truth from the right use of it. The question, to a plain Christian, seems to be settled by this declaration of our Lord: — "He that doeth His will shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God."

As, in many of those to whom we have been alluding, aberrations seem to have been occasioned rather by the vagrancy of the imagination than the corruption of the heart, we are not without hope that they may yet retrace their steps; that the way they have lost may be recovered; that their involution in this labyrinth may not be past extrication; that Divine grace may furnish a clue to lead them back to the plain, obvious, intelligible meaning of the unsophisticated word of God. That this may

be the case, is the cordial wish and prayer of many who loved and respected them before they were unhappily led astray by erratic fancies into these seducing theories.

There is no method which the subtle adversary of mankind has not devised to injure religion. When the church is at a low ebb, when she is sunk in forms and outward observances; when zeal is asleep, and all seems safe because all is still; he sometimes rouses her, but it is to wrong purposes: it is not to advance the interests of Christianity, but to bend his force against some symptoms of its returning spirit, which begin to break out: these symptoms of incipient zeal he calls enthusiasm, though an evil which, perhaps, in that stage of the church, does not exist; he, however, strives to prevent the existence not of enthusiasm but of zeal, that the frigid may enjoy their doze, and not be reproached by the threatened exertions in the quarter which is beginning to open its eyes.

At another period, when the church is beginning to be triumphant, he sends out his favourite engine persecution, with his faggot and his axe, burning where he could not refute, and subduing by force what he could not silence by argument.

He is now pursuing a different course. The same malignant spirit which once laboured to drive men from Christianity by martyrdom, now draws them from it by sophistry. He now deteriorates truth instead of persecuting it; and as the process is less revolting, it succeeds better. Men are no longer terrified into error, but coaxed into it.

They are not frightened, but wheedled out of their belief. Their understandings become so bewildered, that they are persuaded that every new advance in heresy is a fresh step towards truth. Advantage is made even of their prejudices, which become more deeply rooted by the very change which they are made to believe is to extirpate them. New converts, who once valued themselves on their incredulity, have become credulous to excess; and those who were previously indifferent to sober religion, are led to swallow the wildest perversions of Christianity, to adopt opinions which she as heartily rejects as she did their former unbelief.

Some subjects are placed out of the reach of the human mind. Presumptuous spirits lose themselves by attempting to pierce through forbidden bounds; by endeavouring to explain things beyond the limits of created comprehension, they subvert the truth they pretend to serve, they involve themselves in the very difficulties they undertake to clear. The humble Christian, like the seraphim, "covers his face" before the infinite Majesty of Heaven, and exclaims, "O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" — "Verily, Thou art a God that hidest Thyself."

We are not called upon to unravel intricacies, but to hold fast the form of sound words. While to the ill-informed these new teachers appear profound because they are unintelligible, they remind those of better judgment of certain animals, who, burrowing in shallow ground, just beneath the sur-

face of the earth, fancy they are deep only because they are dark.

Many a metaphysical reformer, by the manner of conducting his system so exposes and defeats his own cause, as to resemble in fate, though we say not with any similarity of intention, the Neapolitan atheist Vanini, who, with eleven others of the same class (we presume the number to be a match for the twelve apostles), endeavoured to establish a regular college of infidelity. The object was nearly the same with that of the late atheistical school in France; and by having the priority of two centuries, they robbed that recent rabble of the meritorious claim to original wickedness.

Vanini's object was to exterminate the very idea of a God, and for this he adopted a most singular method. He undertook to prove there was no God by stating the general idea of God. He strangely fancied that to define the idea was to destroy it; and that to pretend to say what God is was the surest way to disprove his existence! His definition is so artfully made out, and part of it is so ingeniously written, that while he thought he was drawing only the creature of his imagination, it appears as if he were enthroning rather than deposing his Creator. A marvellous delusion to argue against the being of God from the very magnitude of his perfections! Let the delirious metaphysicians of modern times alone, and we had almost said they will also argue themselves into the abyss of forgetfulness.*

* For a fuller account of this metaphysical atheist, see Mr. Saurin's sermon on "The deep things of God."

We want more simplicity in the exercise of our religion; we want to be reformed by it, and not to reform it; we have need to be sent back to our first rudiments. We should imitate the plainness and uncomplicated method of the New Testament, where the doctrines are few, but of importance inestimable, infinite, eternal! We should examine the grounds of our faith by this unerring guide, and not by the pullulations of our own visionary fancies. We want to be sent back to elementary principles. We need not even think it beneath our wisdom to be directed by that familiar summary, the Apostles' Creed. It were well if we fixed our own faith by the articles comprised in, and enclosed by, that safe compendium, instead of turning it over to our children, as if we were above its beggarly elements. Even the way-faring man cannot stray while he is contented to keep close within this hedge.

Many do not virtually adopt its first simple declaration, "I believe in God;" for to believe in God, on the Christian scheme, is not merely to believe in a first cause, is not merely to believe in His existence; we must also believe in His attributes, His promises, His threatenings, His Son, His word, His Spirit; to believe in those attributes especially which harmoniously meet in the glorious union of truth and mercy, the blessed combination of righteousness and peace in the person of his Divine Son; those promises which are eternal life to as many as keep his commandments; those threatenings which say to the un-

godly, "Depart from me, I never knew you;" that holiness without which no man shall ever see His face.

A bad principle is of much more extensive mischief than a bad example; the latter, it is true, like a conflagration, has a tendency to destroy whatever comes within its reach: but a pernicious principle, like the variolous matter, may be conveyed to any distance, and infect the patient, though he had never come in contact with him from whose eruption it was taken. "It is time for thee, Lord, to lay to thine hand, for they have destroyed thy law!"

But it is not the entertaining a dangerous opinion, it is this rage for proselyting to new opinions, which constitutes the most malignant part of the mischief; an erroneous doctrine not propagated, hurts none but him who holds it; but by propagating it to unsettle the minds of multitudes, to deteriorate the Gospel, and to disturb the peace and unity of the church, is surely no light evil, especially in a country like ours, proverbial for its credulity and love of novelty; and in a church like ours, which has been reformed, sifted, and purified, beyond the example of any other in the Christian world.

The everlasting edifice of the Gospel is founded on a rock, whose stability neither storms can shake, nor waves undermine. Nor can any contrivances of man improve the beauty of its superstructure. Its depths cannot be fathomed by our short line, nor its height fully apprehended by our short sight!

Christianity, then, is no appropriate field for the perplexities of metaphysics, nor the industry of new discoveries. This brief title of the Bible—THE WORD OF GOD—excludes the censure of all cavillers, annihilates the emendations of all critics!

It is with unfeigned sorrow the writer has witnessed the rise and progress of the new community. If she knows any thing of her own heart, the preceding remarks have not been dictated by a censorious spirit. But it may be said, she was not called upon for any such impertinent animadversions. The probability of such a reproof makes her feel herself obliged to account for the liberty she has taken.

Those who have condescended to look into her former writings, need not be reminded, that she has through life, in a considerable degree, though not exclusively, devoted her humble talents to the service of her own sex; and has conscientiously, though feebly, laboured to be useful to their best interests in every way she could devise. She has endeavoured to strengthen them in the pursuit of what was right, and they have had the goodness to bear with her when she has reminded them of any aberrations from that pursuit.

Though the deep interest she has taken in their credit and their welfare has by no means invested her with a right of interference on the present painful occasion, yet it would not have been consistent with her antecedent practice, to overlook a circumstance in which they are so deeply involved.

It has excited the most lively feelings of [illegible] in many minds, to hear, in a recent instance, of the departure of some ladies of consideration [illegible] that reserve and delicacy so peculiarly the characteristics of their sex, and so naturally appropriate to their own respectable characters and situations in life. They appear not only to have entered [illegible] warmly into all the tenets of the seceding sect, but to labour very assiduously for their propagation. They are, it seems, not only followers, but joint leaders in the several departments of the government of the seceding party.

Tenderness of heart, warmth of feeling, and liveliness of imagination, form a most interesting part in the composition of an amiable woman; but the qualities which adorn, are also the qualities which mislead. The very attractions which cause them to please, may become snares. If not carefully directed, they give a wrong bias to the character, and a dangerous tendency to the conduct. They lead their possessor more widely astray than is commonly the case with those who are destitute of these pleasing powers.

That providential economy which has clearly determined that women were born to share with men the duties of private life, has as clearly demonstrated, that they were not born to divide with them its public administration. If, then, they were not intended to command armies in war, nor to direct cabinets in peace, to legislate in the senate, nor to debate at the bar, — doubtless they were not intended to be public teachers of religion,

to be makers of canons for a new church, nor to invent dogmas to overturn an old one; nor to be professors of proselytism, nor wrangling polemics, nor conductors of controversy, nor settlers of disputes — disputes which will continue to be agitated as long as men have hot heads and proud hearts; as long as they possess vanity or curiosity, impatience of restraint, or a love of opposition; a weariness of sober truths, and a thirst after the fame to be acquired by their subversion.

Why will women of sense, then, defeat their providential destination? Why desert their proper sphere, in which they were intended to benefit, to please, even to shine, at least as stars of the *second* magnitude? Why fly from their prescribed orbit? Why roam in useless and eccentric wandering,

> "And, comet-like, rush lawless through the void,"

and then having for a season astonished with their false and momentary blaze, fall disregarded and forgotten?

These well-meaning ladies would be among the last to use their allotted measure of grace and accomplishment, to any purpose which they believed to be improper; yet they require to be told, that neither should their talents be exerted to the purposes of spiritual seduction; that they should not be employed to disturb the faith, to shake by dispute, or weaken by persuasion, the steadiness of persons who, without their endowments, are perhaps in a safer state.

But though the writer cannot hope that these

observations will produce any effect on those who are already embarked on this sea, without a shore, and without a bottom, — happy would she be, if they might become the means of preserving one inexperienced female from the perils to which novelty, curiosity, and pressing invitation, too easily allure.

Her sure preservative from this danger is to cultivate deep humility and self-distrust, to keep clear of the very threshold of innovation, to avoid the first step; for all the subsequent ones are easy. Let her bear in mind, that, once seduced, she may find, that "when she would inherit the blessing, she may be rejected, and find no place of repentance, though she may seek it carefully with tears."

ILL EFFECTS OF THE LATE SECESSION.

AMONG the evils to which the late secession has contributed, those we are about to mention are of no light nature. It has been the means of exciting a sort of spiritual vanity, of awakening a desire of departing from received opinions, in certain young persons, who may be designated by the name of premature instructors. It has increased the alienation of the lower orders from the church; it has afforded to some who are not favourable to serious piety, a pretence for indiscriminately classing together men of different views, characters, and principles. Among the more respectable, it has stirred up a spirit of debate and controversy, by no means friendly to the cause of genuine Christianity. We shall notice these effects in their order.

There is scarcely a greater mistake in morals, than is committed by those who habitually speak of vanity as a trifling fault, as a small pass not worth guarding. There is, perhaps, scarcely an error which is so generally adopted, and so carelessly overlooked. It finds its way into characters of every species, and almost into every individual of the species. There is not only the vanity of beauty, of rank, of riches, of learning, of talents, but, as we have already observed, vanity intrudes itself into religion itself.

A bold familiarity with Scripture, an unhallowed touching of the sacred ark, not as formerly by sceptics and scoffers only, but by persons professing, and we believe intending to be religious, are, it is to be feared, becoming too common. This, like many other of our offences, has its foundation in vanity. It is obvious that an unwillingness to be taught, and an impatience to teach, mark the character of the present day.

There is a scion from this presumptuous stock, which, perhaps, has not had sufficient time to grow, in order to become generally known, but which is beginning to sprout up in certain provincial towns and villages. There is a growing disposition in a few arrogant young men to read the Bible with their own glosses and interpretations, and to aim at proselyting, and "taking captive" not only "silly women" but silly girls. Several of these persons, as soon as they began to open their eyes on the importance of religion, or rather before they were broad awake to its truths, have undertaken this gratuitous tuition. Instead of taking time to promote their own advancement; instead of learning wisdom by an increasing discovery of their own ignorance; instead of improving in Christian knowledge by the only legitimate methods, diligent study of the Bible with the aid of the soundest commentators, both accompanied with fervent prayer for that light they profess to seek; — without consulting able ministers, — without taking this straight and obvious road, — on their own very slender stock they set up for teachers themselves. Instead

of looking to the experienced and the wise, they collect a little group to look up to them, thus inverting the Apostle's observation — for *they* "when for the time they seek to be teachers, have need to be taught themselves, which be the first principles of the oracles of God." If this spiritual vanity should flourish, we shall soon have none left to learn; all will be teachers.

Thus the raw and rash Christian, confidently jumps over all the intermediate steps between the enquirer and the instructor, and despising the old gradual approach to the sacred temple, despising the study of books, of men, and of himself, starts up at once a full-grown divine; — the novice seizes the professor's chair, erects himself into a scholar without literature, and a theologian without theology. On the strength of a few texts ill understood, and worse applied, he undertakes to give his young neighbours new views of the Bible, and without eyes himself, sets up for a guide of the blind.

These young persons, in reading the Scriptures, seem to be setting out on a voyage of discovery of something new, rather than on a course of observation on what their precursors have done for them. They search not, with devout enquiry, but fearless curiosity; they look out for passages written in a different connection, and applied to different purposes, and then try to prove that they produce no consecutive reasoning, that they do not establish the generally received doctrines. How should they? They were never intended to produce the

one, or to establish the other. They bring together propositions which have no relation, and which require different proofs, and then triumph in the supposed opposition of what was never intended to agree.

Thus fools rush in where angels fear to tread.

Suffer a few friendly hints. Though Holy Scripture was given to be searched, it was not given to be criticised. It was "written for our learning," not for our cavilling: it was given not to be pertly scrutinised, but to be "inwardly digested;" not to make us wise in our own conceits, but "to make us wise unto salvation." It is not to be endured to hear questions, on which hang all our hopes and our fears, speculated upon as if they were a question of physics or history, and explained till they become contradictions.

Men taught of God, and possessing those depths of erudition which qualified them to teach others, depend upon it, have left nothing for your discovery except the discovery of your own insufficiency. If there are obscurities, they will not be cleared by such shallow expositors. The sun of righteousness will not be made to shine brighter by the glimmering of your farthing candle.

Boldness in religion, we repeat, is one of the great evils of the present day. The more we cavil, the less we shall obey. We may explain truths till we come to deny them. We may be so involved in intricacies of our own weaving, that we may end by opposing the doctrine we undertook

to clear. Oh! there is no security like a humble mind; a mind always distrusting its own wisdom, and always confiding in the wisdom of God.

Why, then, will not the premature instructor wait till he is himself instructed? Why not look up for information on difficult and disputed points to wiser and older heads? Why not, in their little parties, turn their attention to practical points, rather than to speculate niceties? Why not cultivate that self-inspection and heart-humbling prayer which would cure those conceits that lead to a critical and often end in a sceptical spirit? Such habits would best preserve them from that inflation of heart which arises from the vanity of some supposed new discovery, in a religion which was given us by the Spirit of God.

The Scripture no where teaches us to indulge this audacious curiosity; it stirs up no eagerness for pushing speculation beyond its legitimate bounds. It furnishes no invitation for ranging beyond the limited sphere allotted to our imperfect human condition. Its incitements are not irritations, but encouragements. The Bible wisely represses all that spiritual vanity which would dive into unprofitable, because impenetrable, mysteries. It teaches us all that is necessary for us to learn, and there it stops. It teaches what is of prime importance for us to know, — that we are fallen creatures. It shows what we ought to *believe* in order to our being rescued from this state of apostacy. It instructs us in all that is necessary for us to *do* to be restored to the favour of God, which

by sin we had forfeited. It is enough that it lays open the disease, presents the remedy, and offers God's Holy Spirit to render it effectual. In short, it reveals all that as probationary beings we should desire to know, and of all we know it expects us to make a practical use.

The present is, especially among the lower ranks, an age of rebuke and blasphemy; and what is so likely to augment the popular hostility to Christianity, and neglect of the established church, which is founded upon it, as when they see some of its ministers reprobating at one time, the church which they warmly defended at another? — when they see them actually renouncing it as unchristian, and setting up a new system in opposition to it? Where, then, is truth to be found, may not even the more sober amongst the people say, if it is not found in that church, in defence of which so many of her divines, so many of her bishops, were led to the scaffold and the stake? Will not the loose and careless be likely to be confirmed in impiety, when they see these men, who were fostered in her bosom, who had subscribed to their belief in her articles, who had been warm beyond their fellows in the admiration of her liturgy, her doctrines, and her discipline, — when they see these men not only desert her altars, but take up arms against her? When they behold a perpetual conflict between Christian ministers, — for a church that is attacked must be defended, — will they not think that an establishment which is so frequently assailed, which requires such continual vindication, from which

there are so many recent deserters, must needs be an erroneous and unsound church, and even the Scriptures on which it is founded, uncertain, if not false?

What is so likely as this defection to give confidence, without the least intention of doing so, to that spirit of infidelity which used to skulk in corners, and stab from behind a mask, but now avows itself boldly, bares its unblushing front to public gaze, spurns at law as well as decency, openly defies government, which it used to fear, as well as God, whom it never feared?

Was it not enough that these low, designing demagogues, — men who think one religion as good as another, and no religion best of all, — was it not enough that these open violators of order, truth, and justice, should, as the most probable means to accomplish their political mischiefs, endeavour to overturn the church, by bringing her creeds, and her other holy services, into contempt; insulting, by their profane parodies, all that is grave, and rendering ridiculous all that is good? Yet, from such men, such attempts excite our regret and astonishment less than those we have been contemplating. How grievous is it, when persons of a totally different description are, perhaps, undesignedly, contributing to help on the work which, we are persuaded, they abhor! — when decorous and religious men, though by other devices, and with other weapons, may be contributing to accomplish the work of these vulgar politicians, and assisting, in no inconsiderable de-

gree, to discredit the church which the others are labouring to subvert!

Nay, in one respect, the better men are doing the worse deed; for the factious assailants of the church injure those alone who were injured before; and by the grossness of their attacks, shock all who are not totally given up to impiety; while, in the present instance, those more decent characters are more likely to be led astray, who have shown some disposition to be serious; and are, therefore, in more danger of being misled by the specious subtleties, and the assumed tone of confident security, of these religious dogmatists.

The inexperienced and the wavering, — those who are unconfirmed in their principles, together with others who have their religion to seek, and who like to have one pointed out to them which will not disturb their repose by the severity of its practical injunctions, nor the self-denying spirit of its tendencies, — are likely to be led astray by these false lights; while the sober and self-distrusting Christian will only be driven, by these alarming novelties, to adhere more closely to the humbling and consistent doctrines of the New Testament, — will, with deeper prostration of heart, implore the aid of the Holy Spirit, not only to lead him into all truth, but to *keep* him in it. Such a one will find that it does not require profound knowledge, or deep learning, to perceive the awful dangers of the presumptuous innovations which lead to these perilous subtleties, — which terminate in these bold conclusions. He will see that com-

mon sense, an humble mind, and a competent acquaintance with Scripture, are all that is wanting to discover that the Bible, and the novelties of the seceding community, cannot both be right.

But the evil does not end here; for some of the adversaries of serious piety are, it is to be feared, disposed to take a most unfair advantage of this secession; and the very circumstance of that separation, which ought to have rescued men who firmly adhere to the church, and to the principles on which it is founded, from suspicion, increases it, and causes them to be involved in one common charge of extravagance and error, with men whose opinions they abhor: whereas, when the vessel is assailed by an unexpected storm, instead of throwing themselves out to sea in quest of imaginary safety, the tempest only makes the experienced Christian mariner cling the closer to his hold. Men of more than ordinary zeal and activity, then, should not be suspected of disaffection, unless they afford other, and more substantial reasons, for doubting their want of orthodoxy. Does it not look as if there were no soundness but in apathy, no security but in inertness?

One of the great evils of the times is rash judgment, indiscriminate attack, and a zeal for censure without examination; a not separating men who are materially dissimilar, but lumping them into one common reprobated mass, or, at best, speaking as if the difference were so little, that it was not worth the pains to separate them.

Perhaps there are no church communities in the world that do not hold some doctrines in common. We are identified in some important points with the church of Rome; but that does not blind us to its errors, nor does it prevent our keeping clear of them. There are both rational and orthodox communities in our own country; but our holding some opinions in common with them, neither makes us adopt those opinions which we disapprove, nor condemn those who profess them, as if they held none that were right. Why, then, should not the case be the same in our own church?

This lumping system is not a little hard on the steady and orderly divine. It weakens the hands of the faithful pastor, when his auditors, who have just been hearing him speak the words of truth and soberness, find him, perhaps, in the next controversial pamphlet they take up, coupled with the half-insane, and the wholly absurd. It is hard that the zealous Christian, who is at the same time a pattern of propriety and correct demeanour, should be dragged in to make common cause with those at whose principles he shudders. Yet these men of opposite characters, principles, and pursuits, are forced into contact, are together plunged into the crucible of undistinguishing prejudice, and melted down together; all distinctions so lost in the fusion, the sober Christian so mixed with the fanatic, the temperate with the fiery, the regular with the eccentric, that they come out of the furnace blended into one common mass, and are

reproduced as if formed of one common material.

Ours is also pre-eminently an age of controversy. Is not charity sometimes recommended with uncharitableness, and religion vindicated irreligiously? But are there not a thousand other subjects better calculated for its legitimate exercise? "Let the potsherds strive with the potsherds of the earth," on all other topics; but here, though one dash the other in pieces, he does not always escape unhurt himself. But shall the word of "the High and Holy One, the word of Him who sitteth on the circle of the earth," be made an arena for the combats of its puny inhabitants, whom the prophet represents by the most contemptible insect?

But although, as we have already observed, if truth be attacked, it must be defended, the Christian controvertist never engages in offensive war. He does not fight for victory, but truth. And the surest way for him to ascertain this, is, to examine the temper with which he defends it. Rivalry is not his motive, nor is railing his weapon.

If, as it is said, warfare is the natural state of man, let its hostility among Christians be directed to a foreign enemy; let them not engage in civil war. You have already "provoked each other to good works," which is part of the law; go on, and provoke each other to "love, which is the fulfilling of the law." Let both sides rejoice in the good done, without caring which does it. "There are diversities of operations, but it is the

same God which worketh all in all." If there is so much done separately, what a mighty mass of good would be produced by cordial co-operation! Let me not be accused of levity in applying the words of the poet,

> The Douglas and the Percy *both together*,
> Were confident against a world in arms.

We know that, in the sight of God, he is not the most successful champion who may have given most falls to his adversary; but he who has obtained the most victories over his own spirit. And *he* will be found in the great and tremendous day of reckoning, to have been the most valiant soldier of Jesus Christ, not who has been the fiercest combatant in the field of controversy, but who shall have brought most glory to God, and most souls to heaven.

If we made, as surely we ought to make, the Holy Scripture our standard of judging, as well as of believing, of charity as well as of faith, of brotherly-kindness as well as of orthodoxy; — if we brought the Bible to be the constant arbiter of our debates, as well as the professed rule of our lives, we should attack nothing with warmth but what that Bible condemns. All differences of opinion in which God has not set to His seal that it is false, should be treated with candour; men should not then make their own supposed "purged eyes" the universal medium of clear vision; they should not vilify others for seeing the same object with other optics. Want of charity is probably no less a fault than the one

we may be reviling; and does not a want of discrimination, or rather does not that blindness which is inspired by prejudice, lead to such a deficiency in candour which widens the difference? To profess opinions of which Scripture neither commands nor prohibits our belief, ought not to set at irreconcileable variance beings who are equally candidates for heaven. In that abode of perfect peace and perfect love, no small portion of the promised felicity may arise from our being of no party.

A difference in opinion on points on which the Holy Spirit has been silent, on which no declaratory sentence in Scripture has been pronounced, is surely no ground for the triumph of superiority in those who maintain them, nor for supercilious contempt in those who reject them. Is it not putting matters of minor importance in the place of essentials? while, perhaps, by the disputants on both sides, essentials are not always held with so firm a grasp, or at least are not debated with such unkind pertinacity.

We have hitherto alluded to difference of opinion between pious men, men who on both sides are in earnest in their religion. But are there not men of little piety to be found, who side with one or the other party, and become the hottest controvertists, while they take little real interest in vital religion: who oppose without belief, and defend without conviction, merely because they wish to be appended to that side which they happen to think most creditable, most popular, or most profitable?

Let us, then, love in each other now what God loves in us, and bear with the rest. The cultivation of this spirit of kindness would so sanctify the temper, that we should forgive and overlook those inferior matters in others, which might not exactly coincide with our own views and opinions.

These discrepancies in sentiment are perhaps permitted for mutual advantage; and the cultivation of a candid disposition may be carried to a wider extent, and a spirit of forbearance be kept in higher exercise, where there are some points to keep forbearance in action, than if there were no such thing as diversity of sentiment. By the constant and reciprocal operation of this spirit of Christian kindness, we shall be made more meet for that state where all will be of one mind, as well as one heart, where charity will have its full consummation, and forbearance its full reward.

Let us, then, prepare ourselves, and each other, by the exercise of the one for the fruition of the other. Let God be all in all now as he will be hereafter, and there will be no room left in the heart of a Christian for animosity, or unkindness towards his fellow Christians. A cordial agreement in those essentials, to which the Gospel has annexed salvation, should swallow up all the present petty, but dividing distinctions. Could this most desirable object be accomplished, then should we hope to see a renovation of that spirit which, in the early ages of the church, provoked even its enemies to exclaim with admiring wonder, *See how these Christians love one another!*

ON THE EXERTIONS OF PIOUS LADIES.

We are now about to tread, which we do with a fearful and timid step, on tender ground. It is with mingled respect and reluctance we venture to touch on certain delicate points which affect the sincerely pious; persons who equally avoid all eccentricity in doctrine, and negligence in practice; yet among whom little errors may hereafter creep in, the very consequence, perhaps, of that increasing and inestimable blessing, religious society. It is to be feared they may incur the hazard of raising in others objections against religion, by their honest zeal to promote it.

The persons to whom we presume to allude are of that sex, in which, perhaps, most piety is to be found, and who are in so many respects essentially advancing its cause. Their services are so materially useful, that it would be a subject of deep regret, if, by any slight inadvertence, their value should ever be diminished. We are too often led to complain of *deficiencies* in religion; we are now to speak — not of its excess, for we believe there is no such thing — but rather to guard the truly pious against the possibility of inconveniences, which, should they arise, would be a diminution of their usefulness.

The thoughtless and dissipated, indeed, who

haunt unsocial crowds, and lay out their talents for this world, which they have chosen for their portion, find their reward where they seek it, in the admiration of that world where they flutter and shine. The others patiently wait for theirs in that single sentence, "Well done, good and faithful servant." Yet though it is painful to say a syllable which might look like disapprobation when only caution is intended, may we hazard a few words, not of censure but of friendly intimation?

May not those large portions of time, and strength, and spirits, so generously spent abroad by some zealous Christians, in the most noble exertions of religious charity, be sometimes suffered to intrench, in some measure, upon the imperious calls of domestic life, upon those pleasing and sacred duties for which HOME is a name so dear? May they not be so exhausted by external concerns, that they may be in danger of entering with diminished interest on the retired exercises of the closet, or the cheerful duties of the family? All business, even religious business, is apt to produce a hurry and bustle in the mind, and an agitation in the spirits, which the most serious persons lament, as being attended with some disqualification for personal improvement. — "My mother's children gave me their vineyards to keep, but mine own vineyard have I not kept," was the pathetic lamentation of the ancient church. They had engaged her in labours and difficulties which she feared had in some measure impeded the pro-

ness of her own spiritual concerns. It was in her own house at Bethany that Mary sat at the feet of Jesus. — We fully admit, however, not only the complete *compatibility* but the expediency of uniting what we owe to those abroad and to ourselves and families at home; the highest characters are those who combine both. We are not combating but applauding a zeal, which we fervently hope may never be suppressed, if it should ever require to be somewhat regulated.

There is no part of Christian duty which more requires us to look well to the motive by which our actions are governed. It is of importance to examine whether our most useful, if busy, pursuits are not influenced by a natural fondness for bustle, an animal activity, a love of notice; whether even the charitable labours grow not more from a restless spirit than from real piety. Let us observe, however, that though these defective motives may at first excite the zeal of some, yet by a perseverance in well-doing, assisted by humble prayer, the motive may at length become as pure as the act is undoubtedly right.

It is asserted, but we trust with more severity than justice, that there is a growing tendency in some truly excellent persons to introduce show and display in their religion; a tendency not quite consistent with the interior, spiritual nature of Christianity. It is not so much an evil *we* are guarding against, as the appearance of evil. Their sex, like their religion, is of a sober character; and the tendency to which we are alluding may

create a suspicion that religion, even among good people, is not so much considered as a thing between God and their own soul as we know it really is; for we are far from suspecting that secret communion with their God and Saviour is not considered as their primary duty. And we are willing to believe that the effect of this duty will always be visible in producing that sobriety and simplicity, which so conspicuously and so beautifully distinguish the religion of the New Testament.

The religion of Jesus is utterly without parade, it affects no publicity. It is enough for his servants to believe that their heavenly Father, who sees them in secret, sees them with an approving eye.

As they have got above acting from the fear of man, the next step is to get above acting for his praise; the excessive applause and commendation of their Christian friends being, in reality, still more to be watched against than the reproach of the irreligious. The one teaches them to be circumspect, the other may in time induce them to believe that circumspection is no longer necessary. This negligence, if it do not make them do wrong, may lead them to be too much elated with doing what is right.

But there are higher motives for the use of discreet reserve in the Christian's mind than what regards merely their personal character. However pure in motive, however innocent in action, they must be careful not to have their good evil spoken

of. They must be scrupulously cautious of not bringing the least reproach on the cause dearest to their affections. Pious persons cannot but know, that with the utmost care to avoid adding to the offence which Christian truth, however discreetly exhibited, necessarily gives, many are looking out for pretences to discredit not only the professor, but the profession itself. But if they should hereafter see any of those improprieties for which they are looking out; if any indiscretion should be found where it is so sedulously sought, Christianity would suffer, and impiety triumph.

We sincerely hope that certain sharp-sighted observers, who are keenly on the watch for any thing that may discredit serious piety, who are peeping in at every crevice, through which they think they may detect any real or supposed ground of censure, may never be gratified with the discovery of what they so industriously seek. But it is obvious, that where they can detect no substantial fault, they take comfort in finding a foible; where there is no deformity they triumphantly carry away a blemish, and are ready to make the most of the slightest imperfection. And a speck which would not be perceived in an ordinary form is conspicuous on that which is white and pure. This, by a *little* perversion, and not a little exaggeration, not only of fact but of conjecture, is propagated till it become a mischief. In the detection of the slightest flaw in characters of eminent piety, they go away rejoicing, as if they had found some hidden treasure. And it is well, perhaps, even

for the best Christians, that there are such critical inspectors; and the knowledge that they are watched will answer an excellent purpose, if it set them on watching themselves.

Am I then an enemy to Christian exertion? God forbid! It is the glory of our age, that among the most useful and zealous servants of our Divine Master are to be found, of "devout and honourable women not a few;" — ladies, whose own education not having been limited to the harp and the sketch-book, though not unskilled in either, are competent to teach others what themselves have been taught; who disdain not to be employed in the humblest offices of Christian charity, to be found in the poorest cottage, at the bedside of the sick and dying; whose daughters, if not the best *waltzers*, are the best *catechisers*; whose houses are houses of prayer, whose closets are the scene of devout meditation; who, not contented with the stinted modish measure of a single attendance on public worship, so contrive to render the hours of repast subservient to those of duty, as to make a second visit to the temple of their God; and who endeavour to retain the odour of sanctity, shed on the sacred day, through the duties of the week.

But to pursue the subject in a different, though not distant direction, we cannot too much commend those valuable persons, whom neither fortune, rank, nor any temporal advantages, have been able to seduce to follow those vain pursuits, those light and, in some cases, dangerous amusements, so eagerly sought by the votaries of pleasure. We

cannot but admire, that all those energies which others are wasting in idle diversions, or employments little better than idleness, are by these excellent persons devoted to purposes of religion, and religious or useful charities.

If, indeed, like the females attached to the new school of theology, they deserted the established proprieties, and prescribed decorums, which have ever been considered as the safeguard, as well as the ornament, of their sex; if they assisted to propagate novel opinions; if they undertook to share the office of directors in spiritual concerns; if they diverted to public purposes the talents given them for the more appropriate and subordinate, but not less useful, offices of private life; if they attempted to clear difficulties in divinity, which the wisest and most learned men had approached with awe and reverence, and had receded, for fear of "darkening counsel by words without knowledge;" — if they undertook to decide between contending creeds while they considered the commandments as antiquated — new-modelling the one and rescinding the other without ceremony; — if they allowed themselves to determine the right and the wrong on points too abstruse, not only for female, but even for human intelligence, to decide upon, and to get rid of those they did not like or did not comprehend; — if they had quitted plain, practical, intelligible religion, for misleading theories, and, like the apostate Galatians, had "removed from Him that called them into the grace of Christ unto another gospel;" — if all these things had

taken place, then they would, indeed, deserve even more censure than they have incurred; then, though we should pity their error and lament their apostasy, we should be among the last to apologise for the one, or excuse the other.

It has been brought as a charge against the valuable ladies whose cause we are advocating, as if it were a departure from the delicacy of the sex to attend at the annual meetings of certain religious and charitable societies; but we know not what reasonable objection can be made to their being modest and silent auditors on these occasions.

They do not attend the resorts of the unemployed or the ill employed, — they do not attend to hear the idle news of the neighbourhood, but to hear "good news from a far country," — news, which the angels in heaven stoop down to hear, — not the conversion of one sinner, but the conversion of many, — to hear that best news, the extension of Christianity to the extremities of the globe, — to hear that

> All kingdoms and all princes of the earth
> Flock to that light; —

To hear

> That eastern Java to the farthest west,
> And Ethiopia spreads abroad the hand
> And worships.

Compare now these inoffensive and quiet auditors with the gay multitudes of their own sex which crowd the resorts of pleasure. Here, they are the peaceful listeners; there, they are the busy performers. The others are not, as here, passive

recipients of entertainment, but the entertainers, but the exhibitors. Yet who, among the worldly, censures one of these classes? — who, among the prejudiced, does not censure the other?

So much for the difference in the *act*; let us examine the difference in point of *time*: for, as in our pleasurable pursuits, the consumption of time, that precious material of which life is made, forms a very considerable object, it cannot be thought unfair to compare the two classes on this ground.

Did the pursuits of both, in point of health, sobriety in dress, security of morals, preservation of delicacy, more nearly approach each other than the most strenuous advocate for dissipation can pretend, yet the prodigious inequality of the two, as to the waste of time, must settle the matter at once with those who know the value of this fugitive, this irretrievable talent.

Compare, then, the few hours in the day, and the very few days in the year, given up by the one to these serious pleasures, with the uncounted hours of the countless nights spent by the other in the *anti-social* crowds of turbulent pleasure — spent, we will not say in the *midnight* parties, for that would give a false impression of the season of those amusements. The midnight hour was heretofore used proverbially to express *late* revelling. But, from the present inversion of hours, that would give an idea not only of dulness and vulgarity, but it would rather designate the hour when company met, than when they parted. Midnight was once the time which *closed* the scene of dissi-

pation; it is now that of *commencing* it. And it is scarcely extravagant to say, that the morning frequenters of the charitable meetings join them not many hours after the others return from the scene of their unquiet pleasures. In the one case, no neighbourhood is kept awake by unseasonable noise and knockings, no servants are exposed to corruptions abroad, nor robbed of quiet rest at home.

To turn from the metropolis to the provinces. Compare the little absences from home of ladies who inspect the concerns and give instruction to the poor, with the long and frequent desertion of another class, not of home only, but of country!

Upon the whole, though we would carefully guard against both, yet we must confess, in the present state of things, it is not so much a little excess of zeal in one quarter, as the visible growth of dissipation in another, which "has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished;" and truly happy should we be, if the pen of the ready writers, so frequently employed against the minor, would occasionally be exerted against the greater excess.

* * * * * *

The opening of the nineteenth century has been a period for the display of extraordinary energies, exerted in every sort of direction. They had been powerfully exerted in bringing on the late revolution. All the energies of France, whether in science, talent, wit, or wealth, were combined in one huge engine for the establishment of atheism on the proposed ruins of Christ and his kingdom.

We hope this grand device was partly foiled, even *there*. In the general assault some skirmishes were fought in this country; but here a counter-attack was made. "Michael and his angels fought against the dragon and his angels, and prevailed." — "The accuser of the brethren was cast down."

Afterwards, the great human scourge of mankind, in the same foreign country, by a singular energy of character, aided by an unprecedented combination of circumstances, to which the previous contempt of religion had led the way, projected the most exorbitant enterprises, and accomplished them by the most successful perseverance in every species of political and moral mischief. In imitation of one whom the enormity of his crimes would almost warrant us in calling his grand inspirer, his labours were perhaps more energetic, because "his time was short." Here again Michael made a counter-attack on the dragon. For it is to the same powerful energies, exerted in the contrary direction, that we may ascribe those numberless noble and beneficial societies at home, which promise to effect a moral change in the condition, not of one country, not of one continent, but of the whole globe, and by which we hope finally, through the Divine blessing, "to beat down Satan under our feet."

But this has not only been a period for exerting the energies of countries and communities: they have been exerted under different situations by different characters, and to opposite purposes, by individuals; they have been remarkably exhibited

in private persons, in a sex where energy is less expected to break out into fearless action;—in Charlotte Corday, in Madame Roland, and other political enthusiasts abroad, all acting with the spirit of the heroines of pagan Rome, and actuated by a religion much resembling theirs.

At home, the best energies of the human mind have been exerted to the best purposes, by private individuals also; and exerted without any departure from modesty, prudence, and simplicity, the sacrifice of which would ill repay the accomplishment of the most popular action.

It would be unpardonable in our remarks, on well-directed energies, to pass over one instance, on which, we trust, there cannot be two opinions. If some of the novelties of the present period are its errors, others are its glory. It is cheering to the wearied pilgrim, in traversing the desert of this sinful world, to have the eye here and there refreshed with a verdant spot, yielding not only beauty but fertility.

In alluding to certain recent undertakings, which reflect honour on our country, it would be unjust to omit one which reflects honour on our sex. Justice, as well as gratitude, would be wounded, were no tribute to be paid to the most heroic of women.

The reader will have anticipated, that we allude to the female Howard. Hers is almost (her sex considered) a higher strain of Christian heroism. Unprotected, and alone, she dared to venture into scenes that would appal the stoutest heart, and in

which the single principle by which she was actuated could have sustained hers. With true Christian courage, she ventured to explore the dreary abodes of calamity and crime, of execration and despair. She took "the gauge of misery," not as a matter of curiosity, or philosophical speculation, but with the holy hope of relieving it. The favour of Him who stopped the mouths of the lions in the prophet's den stopped those of these scarcely less savage beings. Her mild demeanour awed their rebellious spirits into peace.

Her visit was not the sudden ebullition of a charitable fit. It was the result of deliberate reflection, and doubtless of fervent prayer. She had long been projecting the means how to assist these most desperate and forlorn of human kind. She had conceived a hope, that what was flagitious might not be incorrigible; and adopted a well-digested plan for their religious instruction.

But she knew human nature too well, not to know that religious instruction would be very inefficacious without correcting inveterately bad habits. Together with a few pious and able associates of her own sex*, she instituted a school of reform and industry, found manual employment for those who had never worked, and Christian instruction for those who had never been taught. The lips that had been seldom opened but to blaspheme their Maker, were taught to praise Him; the hands hitherto employed in theft, were employed in honest labour. Infants, in a doubly-lamentable sense,

* Among these Mrs. Steinkopff stands in the first rank.

born in sin, and bred in vice, were snatched from a destruction which had appeared inevitable, and put into a train of improvement. The gloomy mansion, which had lately been a scene of horror, only to be exceeded by those more dreadful future mansions to which it was conducting them, changed its face. The loathsome prison, which had witnessed nothing but intoxication and idleness, had heard no sounds but those of reviling and of imprecation, gradually became a scene of comparative decency, sobriety, and order.

If ever a charity of so extensive and public a nature could have been pleaded as some excuse for the remission of domestic duties, this might have been considered as the one exempt case; but it was not so. If she stole some hours from her family to visit the prison, she stole some hours from sleep to attend to her family.

Happily, goodness is contagious as well as sin. We may now say in a *good* sense, "Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth!" Distant places have caught the flame. The bright example is already imitated by other ladies in some of our great towns, and will probably take a still more ample range.

May we conclude this part of our subject by observing, that ladies of other religious professions would do well to copy, in certain respects, the example of the females of the society to which this distinguished lady belongs; — giving in to no habits of dissipation, they have time; addicted to little expense in personal decoration, they have

money; and the time and money thus snatched from vain and frivolous purposes are more wisely directed together into the same right channel of Christian benevolence.

HIGH PROFESSION AND NEGLIGENT PRACTICE.

THERE has seldom been a period in which there was more talk of religion than that in which we live; and we are disposed to believe, that the abundance of the heart in this instance produces its usual effect upon the lips. But it must also be observed, that, in an age of much vital religion, as it must be acknowledged this is, there will naturally be not a little false profession, or, at best, in many professors, more external show than inward piety, — a religion that is sometimes more distinguished by peculiar phrases, and hot contention about opinions, than by much devotedness of heart and life.

One of the causes to which the growth of crime among our poor has been assigned is the growth of our population; and some have undertaken to prove, that it is not because they are worse, but because they are more. This same way of judging may, perhaps, be applied to the apparent growth of error in religion — that it is to be ascribed to its vast increase. As there is numerically a larger population in the religious ranks, may there not be naturally expected a larger proportion of error?

We now, therefore, venture a few remarks on another class of Christians, whose intentions we hope are not bad, though their charity is narrow,

and their information small. We will distinguish them by the name of Phraseologists. These are persons who, professing to believe the whole of the Gospel, seem to regard only one half of it. They stand quite in opposition to the useful and laborious class whom we last considered. None will accuse these of that virtuous excess, of that unwearied endeavour to promote the good of others, on which we there animadverted. These are assiduous hearers, but indifferent doers; very valiant talkers for the truth, but remiss workers. They are more addicted to hear sermons than to profit by them.

Their religion consists more in a sort of spiritual gossipping than in holiness of life. They diligently look out after the faults of others, but are rather lenient to their own. They accuse of being legal those who act more in the service of Christianity, and dispute less about certain opinions. They overlook essentials, and debate rather fiercely on, at best, doubtful points of doctrine; and form their judgment of the piety of others rather from their warmth in controversy than in their walking humbly with God.

They always exhibit in their conversation the idiom of a party, and are apt to suspect the sincerity of those whose higher breeding and more correct habits discover a better taste. Delicacy with them is want of zeal; prudent reserve, want of earnestness; sentiments of piety, conveyed in other words than are found in their vocabulary, are suspected of error. They make no allowance for

the difference of education, habits, and society : a must have one standard of language, and that standard is their own.

Even if, on some points, you hold nearly the same sentiments it will not save your credit : if you do not express them in the same phrases, you are in danger of having your principles suspected. By your proficiency or declension in this dialect, and not by the greater or less devotedness of your heart, and the increasing or diminishing consistency in your practice, they take the gauge of your religion, and determine the rise and fall of your spiritual thermometer. The language of these technical Christians indisposes persons of refinement, who have not had the advantage of seeing religion under a more engaging form, to serious piety, by leading them to make a most unjust association between religion and bad taste.

When they encounter a new acquaintance of their own school, these reciprocal signs of religious intelligence produce an instantaneous sisterhood: and they will run the chance of what the character of the stranger may prove to be, if she speaks in the vernacular tongue. With them, words are not only the signs of things, but the things themselves.

If the phraseologists meet with a well-disposed young person, whose opportunities are slender, and to whom religion is new, they alarm her by the impetuosity of their questions. They do not examine if her principles are sound, but "does she pray extempore?" This alarms her, if her

too recent knowledge of her Bible and herself has not yet enabled her to make this desirable proficiency. "Will she tell her experience?" These interrogations are made without regard to that humility which may make her afraid to appear better than she is, and to that modesty which restrains a loud expression of her feelings. She does not, perhaps, even know the meaning of the term, in their acceptance of it.

Do we then ridicule experimental religion? Do we think lightly of that interior power of Divine grace upon the heart, which is one of the strongest evidences of the truth of Christianity? God forbid! But surely we may disapprove the treating it with flippancy and unhallowed familiarity; we may disapprove of their discussing it with as little reserve and seriousness as if they were speaking of the state of the weather, or of the hour of the day; we may object to certain equivocal feelings being made the sole criterion of religion, — feelings to which those who have them not may pretend, — which those who have them may fear to communicate, before they have acquired a strength and permanency which may make them more decisive; we *may* blame such injudicious questions to incipient Christians, who barely know the first elements of Christianity.

By the apparent depth of their views, and this cant in the expression, the stranger is led to think there is something unintelligible in religion — some mysterious charm, which is too high for her apprehension. They will not hold out to her the

consoling hope of progressive piety; for with them growth in grace is no grace at all, — the starting-post and the goal are one and the same point. One of these consequences probably follows: she either falls into their peculiar views, or she is driven to seek wiser counsellors; or is led, by the hopelessness of attaining to their supposed elevation, to give up the pursuit of religion altogether.

These technical religionists are so far from encouraging favourable tendencies, and "the day of small things," that they have no patience with persons professing hope, and despise every advance short of assurance.

To judge of them by their conversation, they seem to have as firm a certainty of their own security as of the danger of all the rest of the world; that is, of all those who do not see with *their* eyes, hear with *their* ears, and discuss in *their* dialect. You would suppose salvation a very easy attainment, to see them got so much above hopes or fears.

Surely eternal happiness is not so cheap a thing, as that any should plead their claim to it on slight grounds. Some who talk confidently of this certainty do not give strong indications in their life of their having entered in at "the straight gate" which leads to it. If it cost as few sacrifices, and required as little diligence, as some exhibit, there would not be so many who have cause to doubt of their admission. Seek, strive, run, fight, labour, know thyself, humble thyself, — are imperatives not quite so easily or so generally obeyed as to ren-

der "the narrow way" a very crowded avenue. Self-knowledge, self-denial, self-abasement, are safer symptoms than undoubting confidence and exulting security.

The desire and eagerness of hearing and speaking much on religious subjects, though Christian duties, are less unequivocal marks of improvement, than whether we love money less, and our neighbour more; whether there is any abatement in our pride, any victory over our passions; whether we are more disposed to conquer our own will, and to submit to that of God. A growth in candour and charity, in kindness and forbearance, in meekness and self-distrust, will be the probable consequence of a close examination into our present deficiency in these amiable graces.

To these persons, the exclusive credit of their individual preacher is at least as valuable a consideration as the glory of that God whom it may be *his* constant aim to glorify; and they do not think they exalt him sufficiently, if it be not done at the expense of others among his brethren, to whom he perhaps looks up with reverence. There is a wide difference between the kindness of praise and the grossness of adulation; between affection and worship; between gratitude and idolatry.

Since the human mind is so constituted as sometimes to require remission from its stricter engagements; since it feels the need of relaxing into some intervals of pleasure; it is no unimportant object to enquire what pleasures are dangerous, what are

safe, and what may even be made instructive, where improvement is not the professed object.

The persons in question have little turn for books; might it not usefully fill many a vacant gap were they to devote a little of their leisure to rational reading? There is much valuable literature which occupies a large intermediate space between strictly religious and frothy books. History, well-chosen travels, select biographical works, furnish not only harmless but profitable reading. The study of these would improve their views; and, by expanding their minds, furnish them with topics for general conversation and useful reflection. It would enlarge their charity, by letting them see that many authors are not wicked, though they do not always confine their works to religious discussion.

Whatever invigorates our capacity of receiving knowledge, whatever adds new and sound ideas to our stock, is not to be despised as useless, or rejected as sinful. Be it observed, however, that general literature must not be allowed to absorb our time, nor interfere with what is of indispensable obligation; yet, if it be clear from every thing light, sceptical, or unsound, it safely fills up the otherwise idle intervals of a religious life, which without it is liable to sink into meaner recreations, and inferior pursuits. Objects of the first importance cannot be exclusively pursued even by higher capacities than those we are considering. It is particularly necessary, therefore, for these last to supply their leisure with occupations which will

furnish useful information, and matter of pleasing communication. For if the most elevated minds require the relief of change, much more does the ordinary and uncultivated intellect. It has but few images, which are soon exhausted, and must sink into weariness if it be not replenished by new ones. Reading, such as we presume to recommend, might prevent the vacant mind from brooding over mysteries, which it has pleased the God of all wisdom, as well as all goodness, to hide from more enlightened minds than those we are contemplating. The want of something better to do, the want of resources of a higher order, between the duties of the highest, reduces many persons to the most trifling ways of getting rid of time. They who allow of no intermediate reading between a sermon and a play, are often engaged in conversations to which the most frivolous dialogues ever written would afford no adequate parallel; and they who would think it a sin to be studying the history of their country, are frequently, and perhaps eagerly, enquiring into the gossip of their own village, and contributing new anecdotes to its idle annals.

Many books are useful that are not professedly religious, for we have minds as well as souls. We may be well instructed for the purposes of this world, without invading on the more important business of another.

If, then, they would adopt sober literature, in exchange for indolent trifling, their understandings would improve in vigour, and their tempers in

cheerfulness and candour. Every unoccupied mind lays itself open to the incursion of more dangerous enemies than those it intends to avoid: such a mind takes refuge in what is more injurious than the supposed evil, into which it congratulates itself that it has not fallen. A lively "Spectator" of Mr. Addison, or a grave "Guardian" of Bishop Berkeley, would be a pleasing resource. An "Idler" or a "Rambler" of Dr. Johnson might preserve them from realising those characters in their own persons. Such writers would teach them the knowledge of mankind, and let them into many a snug secret which lies unmolested in their own heart. Such books might correct their taste, without deducting any thing from their stock of piety, except perhaps the phrases which disfigure it, would give them a relish for better society, and thus turn their waste moments to some profit. Be it observed, we speak of persons who have much leisure; those who have little, should give that little to the one supreme object.

These religionists delight to speak of themselves as a persecuted people; so that a stranger not accustomed to their dialect, and having been in the habit of hearing the term applied to imprisonment, anathema, and proscription, is rejoiced when he afterwards finds it means no more than a little censure, and not a little ridicule; the latter, perhaps, more frequently drawn on them by their quaint phrases, injudicious language, and oddity of manner, than meant to express any contempt of religion itself.

We do not pretend to say that there is not still to be encountered that lighter species of persecution which consists in reproach, suspicion, and contempt; that there is not still an inferior kind of spiritual martyrdom, which those who would live godly in Christ Jesus must be content to suffer; a persecution which touches not the life but the fame: but this affects only Christians of a higher strain than those whom we are considering; persons who do not draw on themselves censure by their indiscretion, but by their elevation in principle, and their superiority in practice. This reproach, however, they esteem a light evil, and are contented that as it was with the Master so it must be with the servant. It is well, however, if attack makes *even them* more discreet, and reproach more humble.

In short, the religion of the phraseologists is easy, their acquisitions cheap, their sacrifices few, their stock small but always ready for production. This stock is rather drawn from the memory than the mind: it consists in terms rather than in ideas; in opinions rather than in principles; and is brought out on all occasions, without regard to time, place, person, or circumstance.

It has been triumphantly asserted, but probably with more confidence than truth, that the children of pious persons are not, in general, piously educated. We have known too many instances to the contrary to admit the charge.

Though a good man's religion cannot be always transmitted with his estate, yet much has been

done, and is actually doing, towards this transmission; and if it is sometimes found that the fact is as has been asserted, it is, we suspect, chiefly, though perhaps not exclusively, to be found in the class we have been considering. It is, perhaps, in consistency with some tenets they maintain, that they neglect to prepare the ground, to sow the seed, and labour to eradicate the weeds; believing that education is of little use; trusting that whatever is good must come from above, and come in God's own time.

We, too, know that whatever is good must come from above; and that of whatever is good God is the giver: but we know, also, that the ripening suns, and the gracious showers, and the refreshing dews, which descend from heaven, are not intended to spare the labour of cultivation, but to invigorate the plant, to fill the ear, to ripen the grain, and thus, without superseding, to reward and bless the labours of the cultivator.

AURICULAR CONFESSION.

THERE are certain topics which are almost too serious to be overlooked in an undertaking of this nature, and are yet almost too delicate to be touched upon.

Though we are far from thinking auricular confession the worst part of another church, yet we do not wish to see it introduced into our own, especially under the circumstances to which we are about to allude. — There are certain young ladies of good talents, and considerable cultivation, who have introduced what we might be almost tempted to call the coquetry of religion. To the friendship of men of superior reputation for abilities and piety, — frequently to young men, — they insinuate themselves, by making a kind of false confidence. Under the humble guise of soliciting instruction and obtaining comfort, they propose to them doubts which they do not entertain, disclose difficulties which do not really distress them, ask advice which they probably do not intend to follow, and avow sensibilities with which they are not at all troubled.

This, it is to be apprehended, is a kind of pious fraud, an ingenious stratagem to be thought better than they are, by the lowly affectation of appearing to be worse. They ask for consolation which they do not need, for they are really not unhappy; but

it is gratifying to engage attention, and to excite interest. These fanciful afflictions, these speculative discontents, after having, to the sympathising friend, appeared to be removed, are poured with an air equally contrite, and a mind equally at ease, into the ear of the next pious and polite listener; though the penitent had gone away from the first confessor more than absolved, the mourner more than comforted.

This confidential opening of the mind, this warm pouring forth of the soul, might be perfectly right and proper, were the communication confined to *one* spiritual director. For here the axiom is reversed; here, in the multitude of counsellors, there is not safety, but danger. If the perplexity be real, if the distress sincere, why not confide it to the bosom of some experienced female friend, of some able and *aged* divine? There all would be right and safe; there confession would bring relief, if relief and not admiration be wanted; and where the feeling of contrition is genuine, admiration will not be sought.

If the young persons in view were not really estimable we should not have taken the liberty to guard them against this temptation to vanity and egotism: to vanity, because they go away not only with comfort but exultation; to egotism, because they go away with an increased tendency to make self their subject.

A celebrated court maxim-monger *, who was deeply read in human nature, though he did not

* Le Duc de la Rochefoucault.

derive his knowledge from the best sources, nor always turn it to the best account, has, however, given a sound caution, from which communicative young persons might glean a lesson: — "Never talk of *yourself*, neither of your good nor your bad qualities."

It is true the Christian will know the above admonition to be carried too far. He who considers that the soul is liable to diseases as well as the body, will allow the necessity for a spiritual as well as bodily physician. Now if a patient must, in order to obtain relief, tell his case to a practitioner for the body, is it to be forbidden that the languishing and dejected soul should lean for advice on a moral counsellor, "an interpreter, one of a thousand?" — But if the graces of the person or manner, or the hope of attracting undue attention, add nothing to the skill or worth of the adviser in one case, let us take care they do not influence our choice of the confidant in the other.

The writer has been induced to hint at the abuse of this practice from actual instances, in which unsound confidence, and a piety too artificial, by exciting kindness and awakening sympathy, have led to ill-assorted connections, formed on a misconception of the real state of mind of the confessing party.

These remarks are by no means intended to apply to that Christian communion at once so profitable and so delightful. When the intention is simple, the heart sincere, the motive pure, and the parties suitable, such intercourse cannot but

be warmly recommended. The advantage is reciprocal. The doubting and distressed spirit receives the counsel and the consolation it seeks; while the pious counsellor gains a deeper knowledge of the human mind in its varieties, by the communication of the wants, the difficulties, and the sense of sin in the contrite heart. In other religious intercourse, where there is a nearer approach of character, the heart is warmed by the expansion, and improved by the interchange of pious sentiments. The prophet even annexes to it a reward: — "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name."

UNPROFITABLE READING.

We have already ventured to allude to the disproportionate quantity of human life which is squandered in the ever-multiplying haunts of public dissipation; but as this is an evil too notorious to require any fresh animadversion, we shall not stop to insist on the excess to which it is carried, but shall advert to another, which, if less ostensible, is scarcely less mischievous — we allude to the increased and increasing prevalence of idle reading.

For whether a large proportion of our probationary being — time, that precious talent assigned us for providing for the treasures of eternity, — be consumed in unprofitable reading at home, or in frivolous diversions abroad, the effect on the state of the mind is not very dissimilar. The difference between private excess and public intoxication is not very material as to its effects on the individual: the chief difference lies in the example and the expense; for the mind is nearly as much unfitted for sober duties by the one as by the other.

It is the same principle which influences the inveterate novel-reader, and the never-wearied pursuer of public dissipation; only its operation is different in different tempers. The active and lively trifler seeks to lose reflection in the bustling crowd; while the more indolent alienates her mind from what is right, without any exertion of the

body. In one, it is the imagination which is acted upon; in the other, the senses. In one sense, indeed, the domestic idleness is the worst; because it wraps itself up in its own comparative merit, and complacently reposes on its superior sobriety; for, if the spirits are more agitated in the one case, in the other they sink into a more perilous indolence. The scenes acted over by the imagination in private have also a superiority in mischief over those of actual, busy gaiety in others, as being more likely to be retained and repeated. Instances, however, are not rare in which a thorough manager contrives to make both meet. In this union the injury is doubled.

But it will be urged by the too ready advocates, that *all* these books are not wicked. It is readily granted. Many works of fiction may be read with safety, some even with profit; but the constant familiarity, even with such as are not exceptionable in themselves, relaxes the mind that wants hardening, dissolves the heart which wants fortifying, stirs the imagination which wants quieting, irritates the passions which want calming, and, above all, disinclines and disqualifies for active virtues, and for spiritual exercises. The habitual indulgence in such reading is a silent, mining mischief. Though there is no act, and no moment in which any open assault on the mind is made, as in the instances previously noticed, yet the constant habit performs the work of a mental atrophy: it produces all the symptoms of decay; and the danger

is not less for being more gradual, and, therefore, less suspected.

The general manners are becoming more and more relaxed. Even the old restraints, which had a regard to appearances, were not without their use. The writer remembers to have heard Dr. Johnson reprove a young lady in severe terms for quoting a sentiment from Tom Jones — a book, he said, which, if a modest lady had done so improper a thing as to read, she should not do so immodest a thing as to avow.

Many instances might be adduced to prove that the age is gradually grown less scrupulous. We will give only one. Another young lady, independent and rich, about the same time, was tempted to send for Rousseau's Heloise. A very little progress in the work convinced her, that it was neither safe for her to read, nor, having read it, could she either modestly confess it, or conscientiously deny the perusal, if questioned. Her virtue conquered her curiosity; she sent away, unread, a book which may now be seen lying openly on the tables of many who would be shocked at the slightest imputation on the delicacy of their minds or the scrupulousness of their morals.

But to limit the evil of idle reading to the single article of *time*: — It is, perhaps, not too much to assert, that if the hours spent by the higher and middle classes in this profitless perusal could be counted, they would, probably, far exceed in number those spent by the gay in more ostensible and public dissipation. Nay, we are almost tempted

to say, that if, to the account of time dissipated by the latter, were added the hours spent by both classes in acts of devotion and serious reading, perhaps the total aggregate would be exceeded in number by the hours thrown away in the retirement of idle readers.

We are the more earnest on this subject, from being in possession of some facts which evince beyond any persuasions, which confirm beyond any arguments, the perils which we may be thought too warm in deprecating. Among the overflowing number of fictitious writings, not a few are there in the English, and still more and worse in the French and German Schools, in which the intrigue between the already married hero and heroine is opened by means so apparently innocent, and conducted so gradually, and with so much plausibility, as, for a time, to escape detection. Vicious scenes are artfully kept out of sight, while virtuous principles are silently, but systematically undermined, till the imagination, that notorious corrupter of the heart, has had time to prepare the work of destruction. Such fascinating qualities are lavished on the seducer, and such attractive graces on the seduced, that the images indulged with delight by the fancy, carry on the reader imperceptibly to a point which is not so far from their indulgence in the act as some imagine. Such soothing apologies for an amiable weakness, that is, in plain English, for the breach of the seventh commandment, are made by the writer, that the reader begins to think her judgment is convinced, as well as her inclination

gratified; and the polluted mind, brought into the state, of all others, the least willing, and the least able, to resist practical crime, is ready to exclaim, with the satirist of political vices,

That *not* to be corrupted is the shame.

By the indulgence of seducing images, as if they sought to disqualify themselves for resistance, they prepare their minds for the surrender of their virtue. Thus the violation of as awful a prohibition as any in the Decalogue, is softened down into a pardonable weakness. The stabbing the peace and honour of the husband, and the barbarous desertion of the innocent babes, or the still deeper wound given to the grown-up daughter, is reduced to a venial fault, for which the irresistibleness of the temptation is shamelessly, but too successfully pleaded.

In tracing the effect, almost exclusively, of the unrestrained indulgence in these soothing pictures of varnished corruption, we could, were it prudent, produce actual instances of this breach of solemn vows, this total abandonment of all the proprieties, and all the duties of life: and it is too probable, that, besides the known instances to which allusion is here made, others might be adduced as having imbibed from the same sources the rudiments of moral misery, which has alarmingly swelled the recent list of divorces, and thus render it more than probable, that the circulating library is no unfrequent road to Doctors' Commons.

There are distinctions and gradations main-

tained by the squanderers of time in their several ways, of which the well-employed do not perceive the difference. Many who would turn with contempt from the card-table, think little of giving days and nights to these pernicious, or, at best, unimproving fictions — an exchange without being an improvement; for the volumes do not, like the cards, confine the mischief to the time they are in the hands, but, as we have observed, often leave impressions behind them when the others are forgotten.

How gladly should we limit these observations to persons whose time is turned to little account, and spent with little scruple in *any* amusement which is not obviously corrupt! But it is with real reluctance we take the liberty to animadvert on the same error, though not carried to the same excess, in persons of a higher strain of character, persons of correct manners and considerable attainments. Do not many such tolerate in their families abundance of reading, which, to say the least, is not improving, and of which, frequently, this would be too gentle a censure? Even where the books contain little that is coarse or corrupt, still it must be repeated, the prodigious quantity of life they consume must exceedingly deduct from that which would otherwise be allotted to more wholesome studies.

And this is not all. — We hear passages, not the most pure in point of delicacy, and quite unequivocal in point of impiety, repeated with enthusiasm by young ladies, from the works of a noble,

but profligate and infidel poet: a poet rich in abused genius, and abounding in talents, ungratefully employed to dishonour Him who gave them. — But from the same fair lips, we hear little of Milton and of Spenser, of Cowper and of Young, of Thomson and of Goldsmith, of Gray and of Beattie, names once dear to every lover of enchanting song. Nor need we look back exclusively to departed genius, for the innocent and refreshing delights of poetry. The muses have living votaries, who pour forth strains at once original, mellifluous, and chaste.

What shall we presume to say to sober-minded parents, even to grave clergymen, who not only do not prohibit the authors of the school in question; who not only do not restrain their daughters from being students in it, but who not unfrequently introduce, as part of the family reading, poetry, which if it contain not the gross expressions, and vulgar wickedness of the wits of Charles's days, is little less profane in principle, or corrupt in sentiment? There is some knowledge which it is a praise not to know; and the vice in this case being somewhat "refined through certain strainers," furnishes at once a temptation and an apology.

It may be urged, in vindication of this remissness, that as soon as young persons get out of their parents' hands, they will naturally choose their books for themselves. This is granted. — But is not every year which prolongs their precious innocence, a year gained? May not,

within that period, the nascent libertinism be checked, the ardent imagination be fixed to other pursuits, the sentiment of virtue kindled, the taste for purity confirmed, and the habit and love of prayer established? And, above all, is it not a pity that they should be able, hereafter, to plead as an apology for their intimacy with such books, that they were introduced to them by a fond and careful parent?

May we not take the liberty to ask of worthy, but in this instance, injudicious parents, is this practice quite consistent with the command given to fathers, even under a darker dispensation, that they should not limit the improvement of their children to any set hours, but that they should "teach them diligently, sitting in the house, and walking by the way, rising up, and lying down?"

THE BORDERERS.

RELIGION, and the world, used formerly to be considered as two different regions situated separate and apart from each other. They seldom maintained much unnecessary intercourse. One party shuddered at the strictness and severity of the other; which, in its turn, kept aloof from a communication which it feared might contaminate its own purity.

Between them lay a kind of neutral ground, which, though it divided them, was, however, occasionally passed during any short interval of peace for offices of necessity, of business, or of kindness; offices which, nevertheless, produced at no time entire reconciliation.

This neutral territory has been lately seized upon and occupied by a third party, a civil, obliging, and accommodating people, who are so perfectly well-bred, as to be desirous of keeping well with their neighbours on both sides the boundary. They are invited to intimacy by the gratifications held out by the one, and the reputation conferred by the other; present indulgence tempts on the left, future hope on the right. The present good, however, is generally too powerful a competitor for the future. They not only struggle to maintain their own interest in both countries, but are kindly desirous of accommodating all differences

between the belligerent powers. Their situation, as borderers, gives them great local advantages on both sides. Though they keep on the same good terms with both, they have the useful and engaging talent, of seeming to belong exclusively to that party in which they happen to find themselves.

Their chief difficulty arises when they happen to meet the inhabitants of both territories together; yet so ingenious are they in the art of trimming, that they contrive not to lose much ground with either.

When alone with one party, they take care never to speak warmly of the absent. With the worldly they smile, and perhaps good-naturedly shake their head at some little scruples, and some excess of strictness in the absent party, though they do not go the length of actual censure.

When with the religious colony, they tenderly lament the necessity imposed on them of being obliged to associate so much with neighbours from whom, they confess, there is not much to be learned, while they own there is something to be feared; but as they *are quite sure* their inclination is not of the party, they trust there is no great danger. They regret that as they *must* live on terms with the world, they cannot, without a singularity to which ridicule would attach, avoid adopting some of their manners and customs. — Thus they think it prudent to indulge in the same habits of luxury and expense; to conform to many of the same practices, doubtful at the best; and to attend on

some places of diversion, for which, indeed, they profess to feel no great relish, and which, for the sake of propriety, are rather submitted to than enjoyed: "One would not be particular; one does no good by singularity."

By an invariable discretion, they thus gain the confidence and regard of both parties. The old settlers on the fashionable side are afraid of losing them, by opposition to their occasionally joining their enemies; while the religious colonies are desirous of retaining them, and rendering them service by courtesy and kindness, still charitably hoping their intentions are right, and their compliances reluctant. — Thus their borders are every day extending, and their population increasing. As they can speak, as occasion requires, the language of both countries, they have the advantage of appearing to be always at home with each, who never suspect that the same facility in the dialect of the other, equally secures their popularity there.

In one respect, they carefully comply with the apostle's injunction, applying to it, however, a meaning of their own, "They let their moderation be known unto all men." They scrupulously avoid extremes. They keep a kind of debtor and creditor account with religion and the world, punctually paying themselves for some practice they renounce, by adopting some other which is a shade or two lighter: between these shades they discriminate nicely; and the pride they feel in what they have given up, is more sincere than the gratification at what they retain.

Thus, though hovering on the borders of [illegible] countries, they do not penetrate into the depths either. The latitude they happen to be [illegible] varies according to circumstances. An awakening sermon will drive them, for a time, beyond the usual geographical degree; an amusing novel, or a new canto of Childe Harold, will seduce them to retreat. Their intentions, however, they flatter themselves, are generally on the right side, while their movements are too frequently on the other.

But though their language can accommodate itself to both parties, their personal appearance is entirely under the direction of one of them. In their external decorations, they are not behind the foremost of their fashionable friends; and truth obliges us reluctantly to confess, that their dress is as little confined within the bounds of strict delicacy, as that of women the rest of whose conduct is more exceptionable. The consequence is not unnatural; for to those who must *do* like other people, it is also necessary to *look* like other people. It does, however, seem a little incongruous to hear the language of one of the countries spoken, even with a strong accent, by ladies in the full costume of the other.

These borderers are frequently disposed to be benevolent, partly from a warm temperament, partly from a conviction that charity is a duty. They profess to give whatever they can spare, but of that proportion they allow vanity, and not piety, to be the arbiter. If personal ornament, if habits of luxury, did not swallow up their money, charity

would have it. Charity is the next best thing to self-gratification.

Should they continue their present course, and their numbers increase, or, as is commonly the case, should continual motion accelerate progress, the land-marks of separation between the several countries will insensibly be lost, and it will be difficult to define the exact limitations of the invading neighbours.

It has frequently been regretted that an amicable accommodation between the adverse parties could not be accomplished by the interference of this intermediate region. But whenever it has been attempted, it has not always been successful. The coalition, it has been found, could not readily be brought about. Prejudices on the one part, and rigorous demands on the other, have hitherto perpetuated the separation.

Terms of peace, indeed, cannot easily be made where one side expects so many sacrifices, and where the other has so much that must be parted with. The worldly territory having, beyond all comparison, the larger population, is of course the stronger, and therefore most likely to hold out.

But though no actual flag of truce has yet been sent out for a general peace, yet alliances are frequently contracted between individuals of the hostile countries, but on very unequal terms; for it unfortunately happens that the party from the more correct side, "who come out to visit the daughters of the land," have been seduced by the cheerful music, splendid banners, and gay attrac-

tions of the other; and have been prevailed upon to settle in the enemy's camp. To them it more frequently happens that they gradually forget all they learnt in their father's house, and insensibly adopt the manners of the strange country, than that they bring over the other party to their side. It may, therefore, perhaps, be safer not to contract these *unholy alliances*, till there is a conquest obtained by the small territory over the great one; an event which, if we may judge by the present state of the parties, seems at a very considerable distance.

But enough, and perhaps the scrupulous Christian will say, too much, of this light manner of treating a serious subject. We acknowledge the charge; we bow to the correction: confessing that we scarcely know how to approach this important and interesting class of persons, without the thin veil of something between fiction and fact, between allegory and true history. We felt an almost sinful reluctance to say any thing which might seem revolting to these pleasing characters, who have shown some disposition to religion, who love its disciples, without having courage to imitate them. But real concern for their best interests will not allow those who assume to advocate the cause of Christianity, to conceal the distance at which they at present appear to stand from its constraining power, and from its practical consequences.

Perhaps your creed is not very erroneous. Probably the rectitude of your religious friends,

whose doctrines are sound, and the indifference of your fashionable friends, who "care for none of these things," have preserved you pretty clear from errors of opinion. Whilst the occasional society of the pious has kept your sentiments in order, the amusements of the worldly have indemnified you for the severities of the other quarter. But opinions do little till they are ripened into principles. It is reputable to say with one party, "strait is the gate and narrow is the way;" but the company of the other lets you see that it is not so easy to enter in at that gate, and to walk in that way, as you had flattered yourself you should have found it.

To you the *world* is by far the most formidable foe of the triple alliance, of the three confederate enemies, which the Scripture tells us war against the soul. We have presumed that your opinions may not be very erroneous, but there are moral as well as speculative heresies, of which worldliness is the originating principle, and in which it is the practical operator. The WORLD is the grand heresiarch. There are many more who "love the world, and the things of the world," than who care whether doctrines are true or false. While they themselves are let alone to follow their own devices; while they are left undisturbed to their own pursuits; you may propound or controvert, or adopt any opinion, sound or heretical, with equally little danger, with equally little benefit to them.

To the devotee of pleasure there is something harsh and repulsive in doctrines and dogmas; to

take part with them would be going out of the way: while to those who can contrive to make right opinions live on friendly terms with wrong practices, it would be a gratuitous folly to add to the faults of conduct the errors of speculation.

In this affectionate remonstrance, we allude not to what might be called palpable and tangible offences; these the decorums of their condition set them above any temptation to commit. We speak not of any disbelief or contempt of religion; these are not the immediate perils of their position: it is not infidelity but indifference, — a disinclination to Christianity, not as opposed to unbelief, but as it contradicts the maxims, the manners, the habits of their associates. Their danger consists in a supreme attachment to present objects, and a neglect of such as are future; it consists in preferring the pleasures and the interests of the world to the service of Him who made it. They are governed by other principles than those of that Gospel which has proclaimed that "the friendship of the world is enemity against God." They are influenced by its opinions, misled by its example, enslaved by its amusements; they fear lest any deviation from its prescribed code should bring their good sense and good taste in question; lest withdrawing from its practices should bring on them the imputation of narrowness or enthusiasm. In short, they go with "the multitude that keep holiday," not, indeed, in the Scriptural sense, but in direct conformity to the vulgar acceptation of that term.

Worldly allurements find in the unrenewed heart a willingness to meet them, a disposition accommodated to them by temperament, a readiness to pursue them, increased by habit. The natural heart is already on the world's side. Before the world has time to begin its attack, the citadel is disposed to yield. Before the assault is made, there is a mutual good understanding, a silent connivance, between the besiegers and the besieged. As soon as the trenches are opened, the disposition to parley and to submit is nearly the same act.

You appeared, however, to take the first step in what is right, by occasionally joining religious society, and by the pleasure you expressed in it. By that introduction you seemed not undesirous of ranging yourself partly on that side. Having broken through that first obstruction, it was hoped that every subsequent step would have become less irksome.

That religion has its difficulties, we do not pretend to deny; but, with a hearty concurrence of the will, nurtured by cordial prayer, strengthened by a full reliance on the Saviour, and sustained by the aid of His Spirit, which is offered you, the difficulties will daily diminish. Rest not, then, in that low state of religion which is satisfied with the hope of escaping punishment; calculate not how small a measure may suffice, to effect that escape. Search not out for an imaginary intermediate state between the children of wrath and the children of God. Rest not till you have attained that entire consecration of heart, whose object, aim, and end

is eternal life. Forget not, that they who r[illegible] race, though they may come closer to the g[illegible] yet if they come short of it, fail of the p[illegible] completely as those competitors whose dist[illegible] greater; and, if we come short of heaven, w[illegible] we lose it by more or fewer steps, the fa[illegible] equally decisive, the loss equally irreparable.

Those worldly persons with whom you as[illegible] ciate are entrenched on every side by numbers they therefore act as if they thought that the ev[illegible] supposing it to be evil, which is shared amo[illegible] many, cannot be injurious to the individual; f[illegible] getting that every man must bear his own bu[illegible] and suffer for his own sin; for though multit[illegible] may give countenance to your errors here, th[illegible] will not answer for you hereafter.

Do not follow those who have no settled cours[illegible] of their own — who are hurried to and fro b[illegible] every breath of custom — whom fashion leads whithersoever it listeth. The persons against wh[illegible] we would guard you, though confident, are not without their fears; but it is worth observing, that their fears seldom lie on the same side with th[illegible] dangers. They fear not great practical errors: these they soften down and treat with complacency, these are tenderly mentioned as the infirmities of nature — weaknesses to which we are all liable. Almost every excess in personal gratification is thus kindly palliated: "Why did God give us both the disposition, and the means to indulge it, if indulgence were a sin?" There is but one excess they guard against — an excess, indeed, of which

they are in little danger, — we mean a high degree of religion; for surely excess is little to be feared, where the thing has not yet even been entered upon.

Be assured, that whatever serves to keep the heart from God, is one and the same spirit of irreligion, whether it appear in the shape of coarse vice, or whether it be softened by the smoothness of decorum, and the blandishments of polished life. We are far from comparing them together, as if they were equally injurious to society, or equally offensive to decency; but we *must* compare them together as equally drawing away the heart from the worship and the love of God. Courteousness, which is unaccompanied by principle, will stand the most courteous in no stead with Him who is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Some of these well-bred persons, who exercise this large and liberal candour towards practical offences, and treat with tenderness certain vices, not thought disreputable by the world, and who even put a favourable construction on things very unjustifiable in the sight of God, lose all their kindness, put no favourable interpretation, when sound religion is in question. They are, indeed, too discreet to reprobate it under its own proper name; but the ready appellation of enthusiasm presents itself — is always at hand to vindicate the hastiest judgment, and the most contemptuous construction.

But though we think far better things of you, whom we are addressing, yet may you not, in this

society, be tempted to disavow, or, at least, to conceal, even the measure of piety you actually have, for fear of exciting that dreaded suspicion, of "being righteous over-much?" May not this fear, strengthened by this society, keep you back till your pious tendencies, by being suppressed, may gradually come to be extinguished?

We are ready to acknowledge, and to love all that is amiable in you; but we must not forget, that the fairest and most brilliant creature, the most engaging manners, and the most accomplished mind, stand in the same need of repentance, forsaking of sin, redemption by the Son of God, and renovation by His Spirit, as the least attractive. The more engaging the manners, and the more interesting the acquirements, the more is it to be lamented, that those very attractions, by your complacency in them, may have stood between you and heaven, — may, by your resting in them, have been the cause of your not pressing towards the mark for the prize of your high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Bear, then, in mind, that you may be pleasing to others, while you have an unsanctified heart; that politeness, though it may put on the appearance of humility, is but a poor imitation of that prime grace; that good breeding, though the beautiful decoration of a pious mind, is but a wretched substitute for the want of it.

Be assured, however, at the same time, that true religion will in no wise diminish your natural or acquired graces; so far from it, those graces

will be more estimable; they will be even more admired, when they are known not to be the best things you have. When you set less value on them yourself, they will be more pleasing to others; who, though they will not estimate them above their worth, will not depreciate them below it.

We are persuaded that you are too reasonable to expect that Christianity will change its character, or lower its requirements, or make the straight gate wider, or the narrow way broader, or hold out false colours, in order to induce you to embrace it. It is not that easy and superficial thing which some suppose, as requiring little more than a ceremonious attendance on its forms, and a freedom from the gross violation of its commands. This may be nominal, but it is not saving, Christianity. It is not that spiritual, yet practical, religion, for which the Son of God endured the cross, that He might establish it in the hearts of His followers, — which He is pleading with His heavenly Father to establish in your heart. He did not suffer that His children might be excused from self-denial; nor that, because He was holy, they might be negligent. He suffered, that "the women that are at ease might rise up; that the careless daughters might hear His voice, and give ear unto his word." — He, who divinely addressed fallen creatures, knew that a half-resistance was no resistance, and therefore never proposed to them half-measures. He knew that it was not enough to command us to shut the eye, and to arrest the hand. The command is radical. It extends in

the one case to plucking out, in the other to excision.

If you are disposed to think that what you must give up is great, compare it with what you will gain, and you will be ashamed of your miscalculation; you will think the sacrifice as small as the objects sacrified were worthless; for Christianity, though a self-denying principle, yet denies you nothing which, even now, adds to your real happiness. It only disenchants you from an illusion, and gives you substantial peace in exchange. It will rob you of nothing which good sense and sound reason do not condemn, as well as the New Testament.

Perhaps you have just religion enough to render you occasionally uneasy. The struggle between the claims of the world and your casual convictions is far from being a happy state. The flattery which delights, misleads; the diversions which amuse, will not console; the prospect which promises, disappoints. Continue not, then, "working in the fire for very vanity." Labour not to reconcile two interests, which, spite of your endeavours, will ever remain irreconcilable. "The single eye" cannot be fixed on two objects at once.

A life governed by Christianity differs in every thing from the worldly system. It is free from the turbulence and the agitation of its pursuits: it has none of the anxieties and jealousies of its competitions; consequently none of the lassitude and the vexation of its disappointing results. The

further you proceed in its paths of pleasantness, the pleasanter they become. Its difficulties diminish, its delights increase. It has pleasures of its own, higher and better; satisfactions which depend not on human admiration, but on His favour whom to know is eternal life.

Continue not, then, to live as if the great end for which you were sent into the world was already accomplished. Continue not to act as if you thought you had done all for which God gave you an intelligent mind, reasoning faculties, aspiring thoughts, capacities for endless happiness. Let not those powers which were meant to fit you, not only for the society of angels, but for the vision of God, be any longer wasted on objects the most frivolous; on things, which, at best, must end when this world ends. Oh, renounce pursuits, some of them below a rational, unsuited to an accountable, and altogether unworthy of a never-ending, being! Renounce them for objects more becoming a candidate for an inheritance among the saints in light, better adapted to an immaterial, immortal spirit, and commensurate with eternity.

REFLECTIONS

ON

PRAYER, AND ON THE ERRORS WHICH MAY PREVENT ITS EFFICACY.

ON THE CORRUPTION OF HUMAN NATURE.

THE most original French writer of our own time, but who employed his powerful talents to the most pernicious purposes, abruptly begins his once popular work on education with this undeniable truth, — "All is good as it comes out of the hands of God; all is corrupted in the hands of man."

In his first position, this sceptic bears a just testimony to the goodness of his Creator; but the second clause, his subsequent application of it, though also a truth, is not the whole truth. He ascribes *all* the evils of man to the errors of his institution.

Now, though it cannot be denied that many of his faults are owing to a defect in education, yet his prime evil lies deeper, is radical, and must be traced to a more remote and definite cause.

Had the writer been as enlightened as he was ingenious, he would have seen that the principle of

evil in man was antecedent to his education; that it is to be found in the inborn corruption of the human heart. If, then, from an infidel, we are willing to borrow an avowal of the goodness of God in the creation of man, we must look to higher authorities to account for his degeneracy, even to the sacred oracles of God himself.

The subject of man's apostasy is so nearly connected with the subject of prayer, being indeed that which constitutes the necessity of this duty, that some mention of the one ought to precede any discussion of the other. Let, then, the conviction that we are fallen from our original state, and that this lapse furnishes the most powerful incentive to prayer, furnish an apology for making a few preliminary remarks on this great article of our faith.

The doctrine is not the less a fundamental doctrine, because it has been abused to the worst purposes; some having erroneously considered it as leaving us without hope, and others as lending an excuse to unresisted sin. — It is a doctrine which meets us in one unbroken series throughout the whole sacred volume; we find it from the third of Genesis, which records the event of man's apostasy, carried on through the history of its fatal consequences in all the subsequent instances of sin, individual and national, and running in one continued stream from the first sad tale of woe, to the close of the sacred canon in the Apocalyptic Vision.

And, to remove the groundless hope, that this

quality of inherent corruption belonged only to the profligate and abandoned, the Divine Inspirer of the sacred writers took especial care, that they should not confine themselves to relate the sins of these alone.

Why are the errors, the weaknesses, and even the crimes of the best men recorded with such fidelity? Why are we told of the twice repeated deceit of the father of the faithful? Why of the single instance of vanity in Hezekiah? Why of the too impetuous zeal of Elijah? Why of the error of the almost perfect Moses? Why of the insincerity of Jacob? Why of the far darker crimes of the otherwise holy David? Why of the departure of the wisest of men from that piety displayed with sublimity unparalleled in the dedication of the Temple? Why seems it to have been invariably studied, to record with more minute detail the vices and errors of these eminent men, than even those of the successive impious kings of Israel, and of Judah; while these last are generally dismissed with the brief, but melancholy sentence, that they did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord; followed only by too frequent an intimation that they made way for a successor worse than themselves? The answer is, that the truth of our universal lapse could only be proved by transmitting the record of those vices, from which even the holiest men were not exempt.

And as these affecting details unanswerably establish the truth of the doctrine, so they are not recorded for barren doctrinal information. They

are recorded to furnish Christians of every age with salutary caution, with awful warning.

Surely the best man among us will hardly venture to say that he is more holy than Abraham, Moses, David, or Peter. If, then, these saints exhibited such evidences of not having escaped the universal infection, will not every reflecting child of mortality yield to the conviction, that this doctrine is as true as the history which has recorded it? Will he not proceed further to say, "How then shall I be high-minded? How shall I not fear? How shall I deny the cause of the evil tendencies of my own heart, the sins of my own life, the thoughts of foolishness, and the actings of iniquity within myself?" And will not such serious enquiry, by God's grace, acting on the study of the characters of these highly eminent, but not perfect, worthies of old times, patriarchs, prophets, and saints, lead the enquirer, through the redemption wrought for all, and faith in the operation of the blessed Spirit, to that effectual repentance and fervent prayer, to which, in the same Divine history, such gracious promises are made, such wonderful supports are granted?

Had the Holy Scriptures kept back from man the faithful delineations of the illustrious characters to which we have referred, the truth of the doctrine in question, though occasionally felt, and in spite of his resistance, forced upon him, would not have been believed; or, if believed, would not have been acknowledged.

It is, then, one great end of the oracles of Divine

ruth, to humble man, under a sense of his inherent and actual corruptions. The natural man feels it repugnant to his pride to suppose this doctrine is addressed to him.

It is very true, that this all-important doctrine of human corruption, is, like many other truths, both in the natural, moral, and spiritual world, liable to certain speculative objections, and metaphysical difficulties. Laying hold on these, which, often, a child might discover, and no philosopher be able to answer, even upon merely philosophical principles, we excuse ourselves altogether from studying the Divine book; and fearful, in secret, of the discoveries we should make, pretend that its Author has left truth so obscure, as to be impervious to human eyes; or so lofty, as to be above human reach.

But is it not making God unjust, and even the author of that sin which he charges on ourselves, to suppose that he had put truth and knowledge out of our reach, and then threatened to punish us for failing in that which he himself had made impossible? Is it probable that He, whose eyes you say are so pure, that he cannot look upon iniquity, should tolerate it, by tying our hands, and blinding our eyes, and thus abandon us to the unrestrained dominion of that which he hates?

The only real question which concerns us, in our present imperfect and probationary state, is this: — Are the statements of Revelation sufficient to establish this or that doctrine? And is the doctrine so established a sufficient ground for the duties

required? If this be answered in the affirmative, then to ask for fewer difficulties, clearer light, or stronger motives to action, is only to enter a vain contest with Almighty wisdom, and Divine supremacy. Our present disobedience proves that more light would only increase our guilt, stronger motives would only render us more inexcusable. We should reject then what we neglect now. To refuse what we now have, is not for want of light, but of eyes; not for want of motives, but of faith; not for want of rules, but of obedience; not for want of knowledge, but of will. Let us then pity those blind eyes which do not see, and especially those wilful eyes which will not see.

The Christian revelation, as far as respects its professed practical purpose, is brought within the reach of the plainest understanding. We speak of the Gospel itself, and not of those metaphysical perplexities with which the schools have endeavoured to meet metaphysical objections; we speak of the fundamental truths on which God has made salvation to depend. The unlettered Christian lays hold on these truths which the philosopher misses. The former looks to the Holy Spirit for his teacher, the latter to his own understanding. The one lives holily, and thus, "by doing the will of God, he comes to know of the doctrine whether it be of God." The other rejects it, because it is repugnant to his pride, and mortifying to his self-love.

Christianity hangs on a few plain truths;—"that God is, and that he is the rewarder of all that

seek him;" that man has apostatised from his original character, and by it has forfeited his original destination; that Christ came into this world, and died upon the cross to expiate sin and to save sinners; that after his ascension into heaven, he did not leave his work imperfect. He sent his Holy Spirit, who performed his first office by giving to the apostles miraculous powers. His offices did not cease there; he has, indeed, withdrawn his miraculous gifts, but he still continues his silent but powerful operations, and that in their due order — first, that of convincing of sin, and of changing the heart of the sinner, before he assumes the gracious character of the Comforter. What need, then, of heresies, to perplex doctrines, or of philosophy to entangle, or of will-worshippers to multiply them?

We do not deny that there are, in Christianity, high and holy mysteries; but these "secret things," though they "belong to God," have their practical uses for us; they teach us humility, the prime Christian grace; and they exercise faith, the parent attribute of all other graces.

This religion of facts, then, the poorest listeners in the aisles of our churches understand sufficiently, to be made by it wise unto salvation. They are saved by a practical belief of a few simple, but inestimable truths.

By these same simple truths, martyrs and confessors, our persecuted saints, and our blessed reformers, were saved. By these few simple truths, Locke, and Boyle, and Newton, were saved;

not because they saw their religion through the glass of their philosophy, but because theirs was not "a philosophy, falsely so called;" nor their science, "a science of opposition;" but a science and a philosophy which were made subservient to Christianity, and because their deep humility sanctified their astonishing powers of mind. These wonderful men, at whose feet the learned world is still satisfied to sit, sat themselves at the feet of Jesus. Had there been any other way but the cross by which sinners could be saved, they, perhaps, of all men, were best qualified to have found it.

The wise and the weak, the illiterate and the learned, cannot, indeed, equally discuss or expound these doctrines, but they are equally saved by them. In view of the simple means of salvation, talents lose their superiority, learning its dignity, and power its pre-eminence. While the sober Christian keeps on his safe, because prescribed, course, the wise, and the disputer of this world, by deserting it fall into absurdities which plain men escape; they make the difficulties they do not find, and wander in the endless mazes of presumptuous deviation.

To return, then, to the particular doctrine under consideration: — Let us believe man is corrupt, because the Bible tells us he is so. Let us believe that all were so by nature, even the best, since we learn it from this Divine source. Let us, from the same authority, trace the disorder to its source from a fallen parent, its seat in a corrupted

heart, its extent through the whole man, its universality over the entire race.

All are willing to allow that we are subject to frailties, to imperfections, to infirmities; facts compel us to confess a propensity to crimes, but worldly men confine the commission of them to the vulgar. But to rest here would lead us to a very false estimate of the doctrine in question, contrary to the decisive language of Scripture: it would establish corruption to be an accident, and not a root. It would, by a division of offenders into two classes, deny that all offences are derived from one common principle.

Among the higher ranks there is little temptation to the commission of certain sins; murder is rare, fraud uncommon, robbery not found, yet the inborn principle is the same in all. Circumstances, rank, education, example, society, reputation, give advantages to one class, which, had they changed places, might have led to the vices so common in the other; while, had the notorious offenders against the laws and the Divine Lawgiver changed situations with their superiors, we should then have heard only of *their* imperfections, *their* infirmities, *their* frailties.

Temptation does not make the sin, it lies ready in the heart. Accident does not create the propensity, it only brings it into action. It destroys the plea of exemption from natural corruption, but it does not put that corruption *into* the heart. It was there before, ready, without the grace of God, ready, without the restraint of religion,

ready, without the bridle of an enlightened conscience, to break out into any excess. Yet there are many flagrant offences against God and against human laws, which the high-born and the high-bred frequently commit with as little scruple as the lowest. The frequency of duelling, the breach of the seventh commandment, two offences frequently found in the same company, gaming, the violation of the Sabbath, with other enormities, would alone sufficiently prove the principle to exist, independently of rank, education, or fortune. Are not what, by way of distinction, we may call the metaphysical or spiritual sins, which are cherished without loss of character, — is not ambition, which knows no bounds, — envy, which knows no rest, — avarice, which destroys all feeling, — jealousy, which is its own tormentor, — ill temper, which is the tormentor of others, — ungoverned anger, which is murder in its first seed; — are not all these equally to be found in the high-born and the low-bred? Again, is not sensuality in the great, which in the case of the poor might have produced unfair means to indulge it, — is not the love of splendour and ostentation, which are thought to add dignity to the rich, the very principle which leads the necessitous to forgery, the crime for which so many are now suffering capital punishment?

If, then, men would examine their own bosoms as closely as they censure the faults of others loudly, we should all find there the incipient stirrings of many a sin, which when brought into

action, by the temptations of poverty, of ignorance, of unresisted passion, produce consequences the most appalling. Let us then bless God, not that we are better than other men, but that we are placed by Providence out of the reach of being goaded by that temptation, stimulated by that poverty, which, had they been our lot, might have led to the same termination.

Let, then, the fear of God, the knowledge of his word, and the knowledge of ourselves, teach us that there is not, by nature, so wide a difference between ourselves and the men we abhor as we fondly fancy; that there is not, by nature, a great gulf fixed, that they who are on this side might not have passed over to the other. Let us not look to any superior virtue, to any native strength of our own, but let us look with a lively gratitude to that mercy of God which has preserved us from such temptations; to his unmerited goodness, which has placed us in circumstances that have put us above necessity — "the devil's plea." But above all, let us look to that preventing and restraining grace which is withheld from none who ask it, and we shall not be so very forward to say, contemptuously, to the worst of our fellow-creatures, "Stand by, I am holier than thou." A thorough belief in this doctrine would lead us to pray more fervently to be delivered in "all time of our wealth, as well as in all time of our tribulation."

It is not enough that God has *revealed* the way of salvation, he must also incline us to *accept* it.

God causes us to desire what he designs to give. It is this gift, and this acceptance, which makes the distinction between the best men and the worst. Without this all-powerful grace, Latimer might have led Bonner to the stake; with it, Bonner might have ascended the scaffold, a martyr to true religion. Without this grace, Luther might have fattened on the sale of indulgences; and with it, Leo the Tenth might have accomplished the blessed work of the Reformation.

FALSE NOTIONS OF THE DIGNITY OF MAN, SHOWN FROM HIS HELPLESSNESS AND DEPENDENCE.

MAN is not only a sinful, he is also a helpless, and therefore a dependent, being. This offers new and powerful motives for the necessity of prayer, the necessity of looking continually to a higher power, to a better strength, than our own. If that Power sustain us not, we fall; if He direct us not, we wander. His guidance is not only perfect freedom, but perfect safety. Our greatest danger begins from the moment we imagine we are able to go alone.

The self-sufficiency of man arising from his imaginary dignity is a favourite doctrine with the nominal Christian. He feeds his pride with this pernicious aliment. The contrary opinion is so closely connected, indeed is so intimately blended, with the subject of the preceding chapter, that we shall have the less occasion to extend our present observations to any length.

We hear much, and we hear falsely, of the dignity of human nature. Prayer, founded on the true principles of Scripture, alone teaches us wherein our true dignity consists. The dignity of a fallen creature is a perfect anomaly. True dignity, contrary to the common opinion, that it is an inherent excellence, is actually a sense of the want

of it; it consists not in our valuing ourselves, but in a continual feeling of our dependence upon God, and an unceasing aim at conformity to his image.

Nothing but a humbling sense of the sinfulness of our nature, of our practised offences, of our utter helplessness, and constant dependence, can bring us to fervent and persevering prayer. How did the faith of the saints of old flourish under a darker dispensation, through all the clouds and ignorance which obscured their views of God! "They looked unto Him and were enlightened!" How do their slender means and high attainments reproach us!

David found that the strength and spirit of nature, which had enabled him to resist the lion and the bear, did not enable him to resist his outward temptations, nor to conquer his inward corruptions. He therefore prayed, not only for deliverance "from blood-guiltiness," for a grievously remembered sin, he prayed for the *principle* of piety, for the *fountain* of holiness, for "the creation of a clean heart," for "the renewing of a right spirit," for "truth in the inward parts," that the "comfort of God's help might be granted him." This uniform avowal of the secret workings of sin, this uniform dependence on the mercy of God to pardon, and the grace of God to assist, render his precatory addresses, though they are those of a sovereign and a warrior, so universally applicable to the case of every private Christian.

One of our best poets, — himself an unsuccess-

ful courtier, — from a personal experience of the mortifying feelings of abject solicitation, has said, that if there were the man in the world whom he was at liberty to hate, he would wish him no greater punishment than attendance and dependence. But he applies the heavy penalty of this wish to the dependants on mortal greatness.

Now attendance and dependence are the very essence both of the safety and happiness of a Christian. Dependence on God is his only true liberty, as attendance on him is his only true consolation. The suitor for human favour is liable to continual disappointment; — if he knock at the door of his patron, there is probably a general order not to admit him. In the higher case, there is a special promise, that "to him that knocks it shall be opened." The human patron hates importunity; the Heavenly Patron invites it. The one receives his suitor according to his humour, or refuses his admission from the caprice of the moment; with the other, "there is no variableness, nor shadow of turning:" "Come unto me," is his uniform language.

The man in power has many claimants on his favour, and comparatively few boons to bestow. The God of power has all things in his gift, and only blames the solicitor for coming so seldom, or coming so late, or staying so little a while. He only wishes that His best gifts were more earnestly sought.

When we solicit an earthly benefactor, it is often upon the strength of some pretence to his

favour — the hope of some reward for past services: even if we can produce little claim, we insinuate something like merit. But when we approach our Heavenly Benefactor, so far from having any thing like claim, any thing like merit to produce, our only true, and our only acceptable plea, is our utter want both of claim and merit — is the utter destitution of all that can recommand us; yet we presume to ask favour, when we deserve nothing but rejection; we are encouraged to ask for eternal happiness, when we deserve only eternal punishment. Though we have nothing to produce but disloyalty, we ask for the privileges of subjects; though nothing but disobedience to offer, we plead the privileges of children — we implore the tenderness of a father.

In dependence on God there is nothing abject; in attendance on Him, nothing servile. He never, like the great ones of the world, receives the suitor with a petrifying frown, or, what is worse, never dismisses him with a cruel smile and a false promise.

Even if the petitioner to human power escape the vexation of being absolutely rejected; even if his suit be granted, the grant, it may be, is accompanied with a mortifying coldness, with an intelligible hint that the donor expects to be no further troubled. The grant may be attended with such a tedious delay as may make it no benefit. The boon granted does not, perhaps, prove so valuable as the applicant expected; or he finds he might have spent the long season of his attend-

ance, his watching, and his waiting, to better purpose; or he might have employed his interest in another quarter, in obtaining something more important; or, after all, he may have received it too late in life to turn it to the profitable account he had expected. But the Almighty Donor never puts off His humble petitioner to a more convenient season. His Court of Requests is always open. He receives the petition as soon as it is offered; He grants it as soon as it is made; and though He will not dispense with a continuance of the application, yet to every fresh application He promises fresh support. He will still be solicited, but it is in order that He may still bestow. Repeated gifts do not exhaust his bounty, nor lessen His power of fulfilment. Repeated solicitation, so far from wearying His patience, is an additional call for His favour.

Nor is the lateness of the petition any bar to its acceptance: He likes it should be early, but He rejects it not though it be late.

With a human benefactor, the consciousness of having received former favours is a motive with the modest petitioner for preventing his making an application for more; while, on the contrary, God even invites us to call on Him for future mercies, by the powerful plea of His past acts of goodness — "even mercies which have been ever of old." And as past mercies on God's part, so, to the praise of His grace be it said, that past offences on our own part are no hinderance to the appli-

cation of hearty repentance, or the answer of fervent prayer.

The petitioner to human power, who may formerly have offended his benefactor, contrives to soften his displeasure, by representing that the offence was a small one. The devout petitioner to God uses no such subterfuge. In the boldness of faith, and the humility of repentance, he cries, "Pardon my iniquity, for it is *great*."

It is no paradox, then, to assert that attendance on God is the only true safety; dependence upon Him, the only true freedom; — freedom from doubt, and fear, and sin; freedom from human dependence; above all, freedom from dependence on ourselves. As pardoned sinners, through the redemption wrought for them, find, in the renewed nature, a restoration to that dignity they had forfeited, so those who are most destitute of the dignity which arises from this dependence, missing the reality, deceive themselves with the shadow.

He who does not believe this fundamental truth, on which the other doctrines of the Bible are built, — even he who does nominally profess to assent to it as a doctrine of Scripture; yet, if he does not experimentally acknowledge it; if he does not feel it in the convictions of his own awakened conscience, in his discovery of the evil workings of his own heart, and the wrong propensities of his own nature, all bearing their testimony to its truth, — such a one will not pray earnestly for its cure, — will not pray with that feeling of his own helplessness, with that sense of

dependence on Divine assistance, which alone makes prayer efficacious.

Of this corruption he can never attain an adequate conception, till his progress in religion has opened his eyes on what is the natural state of man. Till this was the case, he himself was as far from desiring the change, as he was from believing it necessary. He does not even suspect its existence, till he is in some measure delivered from its dominion.

Nothing will make us truly humble, nothing will make us constantly vigilant, nothing will entirely lead us to have recourse to prayer so fervently or so frequently, as this ever-abiding sense of our corrupt nature — as our not being able to ascribe any disposition in ourselves to any thing that is good, or any power to avoid, by our own strength, any thing that is evil.

THE OBLIGATION OF PRAYER UNIVERSAL. — REGULAR SEASONS TO BE OBSERVED. — THE SCEPTIC AND THE SENSUALIST REJECT PRAYER.

AMONG the many articles of erroneous calculation, to which so much of the sin and misery of life may be attributed, the neglect or misuse of prayer will not form the lightest. The prophet Jeremiah, in his impassioned address to the Almighty, makes no distinction between those who acknowledge no God, and those who live without prayer. "Pour out thy fury, O Lord, upon the heathen, and upon the families that call not upon thy name."

Some duties are more incumbent on some persons, and some on others; depending on the difference of talents, wealth, leisure, learning, station, and opportunities; but the duty of prayer is of imperative obligation; it is universal, because it demands none of any of the above requisites; it demands only a willing heart, a consciousness of sin, a sense of dependence, a feeling of helplessness. Those who voluntarily neglect it, shut themselves out from the presence of their Maker. "I know you not," must assuredly be the sentence of exclusion on those who thus "know not God." Nothing, it is true, can exclude them from His inspection, but they exclude themselves from His favour.

Many nearly renounce prayer, by affecting to

make it so indefinite a thing, as not to require regular exercise. Just as many, also, unhallow the Sabbath, who pretend they do nothing on week-days which they should fear to do on Sundays. The truth is, instead of sanctifying the week-days by raising them to the duties of Sunday, — which is, indeed impracticable, let men talk as they please, — they desecrate the Sabbath to secular purposes, and so contrive to keep no Sunday at all.

Stated seasons for indispensable employments are absolutely necessary for so desultory, so versatile a creature as man. That which is turned over to any chance-time is seldom done at all; and those who despise the recurrence of appointed times and seasons are only less censurable than those who rest in them.

Other duties and engagements have their allotted seasons; why, then, should the most important duty in which an immortal being can be employed, by being left to accident, become liable to occasional omission, liable to increasing neglect, liable to total oblivion?

All the other various works of God know their appointed times; — the seasons, the heavenly bodies, day and night, seed-time and harvest; — all set an example of undeviating regularity. Why should man, the only thinking, be the only disorderly, work of Almighty power?

But whilst we are asserting the necessity of seasons of prayer, let us not be suspected of attaching undue importance to them; for all

these are but the frame-work, the scaffolding, the mere mechanical and subsidiary adjuncts; they are but the preparation for Christian worship; they remind us, they intimate to us, that an important work is to be done, but are no part of the work itself.

They, therefore, who most insist on the value of stated devotions, must never lose sight of that grand and universal prime truth, that wherever we are, still we are in God's presence; whatever we have is His gift; whatever we hope is His promise; feelings which are commensurate with all times, all places, and limited to no particular scenes or seasons.

There is in some, in many it is to be feared, a readiness to acknowledge this general doctrine, which miscalled natural religion teaches; but who are far from including in their system the peculiarities, the duties, the devotions of Christianity. These are decorous men of the world, who, assuming the character of philosophical liberality, value themselves on having shaken off the shackles of prejudice, superstition, and system. They acknowledge a Creator of the universe, but it is in a vague and general way. They worship a Being, "whose temple is all space;" that is, every where but in the human heart. They put Him as far as possible from themselves. Believing that He has no providential care of them, they feel no personal interest in Him. God and nature are with them synonymous terms. That the creation of the world was His work, they do not

go the length of denying; but that its government is in His hands, is with them very problematical.

In any case, however, they are assured that a Being of such immensity requires not the littleness of superstitious forms, nor the petty limitations of stated seasons, and regular devotions; that he is infinitely above attending to our paltry concerns, though God himself anticipated this objection, when he condescended to declare, "He that offereth me thanks and praise, he honoureth me."

One says, *he* can adore the Author of nature in the contemplation of his works; that the mountains and the fields are *his* altar for worship. Another says, that his notion of religion is to deal honestly in his commerce with the world; both insist that they can serve God any where, and every where. We know they can, and we hope they do; but our Saviour, who knew the whole make of man, his levity, instability, and unfixedness, and who was yet no friend to the formalist or the superstitious, not only commands, at the hour of prayer, our entering into the closet, but our shutting the door, — a tacit reproof, perhaps, of the indevotion of the Sadducean, as well as the publicity of the Pharisaic, religion, but certainly an admonition of general obligation.

This, indeed, is not the place to enter on that mass of concurring evidence which so irresistibly confirms the especial truth of Christianity. But is it not extraordinary that these men who overlook, or rather enquire not into, that accumulation of evidence in the exhibition of miracles, and the

fulfilment of prophecy, — that is, who do not read the Bible, — should not at least attend to one species of evidence more immediately within their reach, and more intelligible to common observation; — we mean the confirmation derived to the proofs of Scripture, from the history of the world, from their avowal of moral evil, their careful cultivation, where it suits them, of habits of an opposite nature, their practical and prudential maxims, where they have an end to pursue, an interest to to gain? Do not similar rules, applied to Christian principles, and delivered in the Divine record, prove clearly that our Divine teacher "knew what was in man?"

In treating of prayer, it would be a superfluous labour to address unbelievers with the same arguments or persuasions which we would humbly propose to such as aver, with whatever degree of conviction, their belief in Christianity. It would be folly to address them with motives drawn from a book which they do not believe, or do not read. With those who are ignorant of the first principles of religion, or those who reject them, we have no common ground on which to stand. St. Paul, with his usual discrimination, has left us an example in this as well as in all other cases. With the philosophical Athenians he confined his reasonings to natural religion. To the Jewish king, Agrippa, who "believed the prophets," in telling the story of his own conversion, he most judiciously introduced the great doctrines of remission of sins and justification by faith.

If the Pyrrhonist in question were to see a genuine Christian character delineated in all its dimensions, marked with its fair lineaments, and enlivened by its quickening spirit, such, for instance, as is exemplified in the character of St. Paul, he would consider it as a mere picture of the imagination; and would no more believe its reality than he believes that of Xenophon's Prince, the Stoic's Wise Man, Quintilian's Perfect Orator, or any other Platonic or Utopian representation. Or could he be brought to believe its actual existence, he would set such a man far above the necessity of prayer; he would emancipate him from any such humbling practice; he would enthrone him in his own independent worth; for how should he ever suspect that such a man would ever pray at all, much less would be in prayer more abundant, in humiliation more profound, in self-renunciation more abased?

Is it not probable that some of those enquiring minds who adorned the porch and the academy, as well as those more favoured men who saw the future through the dim and distant perspective of prophecy, would have rejoiced to see the things which you see, and have not believed?

How gratefully would many of these illustrious spirits have accepted advantages which you overlook! How joyfully would they have received, from Him who cannot lie, the assurance, that if they would seek of Him that truth after which they "were feeling," they should find it! How gladly would that sublime and elegant spirit,

whose favourite theme was pure spiritual love, have listened to the great apostle of love; to him who caught the flame, as he leaned on the bosom of his affectionate Master!

How would this same exalted genius, who taught the immortality of the soul to the bright, yet blind, Athenians, — he, whose penetrating mind rather guessed than knew what he taught, — whose keen eye caught some glimpses of a brighter state through the darkness which surrounded him, — how would he have gloried in that light and immortality which the Gospel revelation has brought to light! — but with what unspeakable rapture would he have learned that He who revealed the life could give it, that He who promised immortality could bestow it! With what obedient transport would he have heard this touching apostrophe, at once a strong reproof and a tender invitation — "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life!" — Ye philosophising cavillers, who live in the meridian splendour of this broad day, "how will *you* escape, if you neglect so great salvation?"

But if pride, the dominant intellectual sin, keeps the sceptic aloof from the humiliating duties of devotion, the habitual indulgence of the senses, in another class, proves an equal cause of alienating the heart from prayer.

The man absorbed by ease and enjoyment, and sunk in the relaxing softnesses of a voluptuous life, has a natural distaste to every thing that stands in opposition to the delights of that life.

It is the smoothness of his course which makes it so slippery. He is lost before he feels that he is sinking. For whether we plunge at once from a precipitous height, or slide down from it on an inclined plane, still, while there is a yawning gulf at the bottom, our destruction is equally inevitable.

The systematic but decorous sensualist is one whose life is a course of sober luxury, of measured indulgence. He contrives to reconcile an abandonment of sound principle with a kind of orderly practice. He enquires rather what is decent than what is right, what will secure the favourable opinion of the world, especially his own class, rather than what will please God. His object is to make the most of this world. Selfishness has established its throne in his heart. His study is to make every thing and every person subservient to his own convenience, or pleasure, or profit, yet without glaringly trespassing on the laws of propriety or custom. — Self is the source and centre of all his actions; but though this governing principle is always on the watch for its gratification, yet, as part of that gratification depends on a certain degree of reputation, it frequently leads him to do right things though without right motives; for the main-spring sometimes sets the right in motion as well as the wrong.

He goes to church on all public occasions, but without devotion; gives alms without charity; subscribes to public institutions without being interested in their prosperity, except as they are frequently succeeded by a pleasant dinner and good company, and as the subscription-list of names he

knows will be published. He lives on good terms with different, and even opposite, classes of men, without being attached to any; he does them favours without affection, knowing that he shall have occasion to solicit favours in return, for he never does a small kindness without a view to asking a greater.

He deprecates excess in every thing, but always lives upon its confines.

Prayer enters not into his plan, — he has nothing to ask, for he has all in himself, — thanksgiving is still less his practice, for what he has he deserves.

He has read that "to enjoy is to obey," and he is always ready to give this cheerful proof of the most unlimited obedience. He respects the laws of the country, especially such as guard property and game, and eagerly punishes the violators of both. But as to the laws of God, he thinks they were made to guard the possessions of the rich, to punish the vicious poor, and to frighten those who have nothing to lose. Yet he respects some of the commandments, and would placard on every post and pillar that which says, "Thou shalt not steal;" whilst he thinks that which says, "Thou shalt not covet," might be expunged from the Decalogue.

If you happen to speak of the helplessness of man, he thinks you are alluding to some paralytic; if of his dependence, to some hanger-on of a great man; if of his sinfulness, he adopts your opinion, for he reads the Newgate Calendar; but of sin, as

an inherent principle, of the turpitude of sin, except as it disturbs society, he knows nothing; but religion as a principle of action, but prayer as a source of peace or a ground of hope, he neither knows nor desires to know. The stream of life glides smoothly on without it; why should he ruffle its placid flow? why should he break in on the course of enjoyment with self-imposed austerities? He believes himself to be respected by his fellow-men, and the favour of God is not in all his thoughts. His real character, the great day of decision will discover. Till then he will have two characters.

"Soul, take thine ease, thou hast much goods laid up for thee," is perhaps the state of all others which most disqualifies and unfits for prayer. Not only the apostrophe excites the bodily appetite, but the SOUL is called upon to contemplate, to repose on, the soothing prospect, the delights of that voluptuousness for which the "much goods are laid up." Thou fool! that soul which thou wouldst quicken to such base enjoyment, that soul shall this night be required of thee.

Thus we see what restrains prayer in these two classes of character. The sceptic does not pray, because he does not believe that God is a hearer of prayer; the voluptuary, because he believes that God is such a one as himself, and because he has already gotten all that he wants of him. His gold, and the means of gratifying his sensuality, would not be augmented by the dry duties of devotion; and with an exercise which would increase neither he can easily dispense.

ERRORS IN PRAYER, WHICH MAY HINDER ITS BEING ANSWERED. — THE PROUD MAN'S PRAYER. — THE PATIENT CHRISTIAN. — FALSE EXCUSES UNDER THE PRETENCE OF INABILITY.

ALL desire the gifts of God, but they do not desire God. If we profess to love him, it is for our own sake; when shall we begin to love him for himself? Many who do not go the length of omitting prayer, but pray merely from custom, or education, frequently complain that they find no benefit from prayer; others, that they experience not the support and comfort promised to it. May not those who thus complain, and who perhaps are far from being enemies to religion, find, on a serious examination of their own hearts and lives, some irregularity in desire, similar to that just mentioned, to be the cause of their discontent, and alleged disappointment?

We are more disposed to lay down rules for the regulation of God's government, than to submit our will to it as he has settled it. If we do not now see the efficacy of the prayer which he has enjoined us to present to him, it may yet be producing its effect in another way. Infinite Wisdom is not obliged to inform us of the manner, or the time of his operations; what he expects of us is to persevere in the duty. The very obedience to the command is no small thing, whatever be its perceptible effects.

Under the apparent failure of our prayers, the source of our repinings must be looked for in the fact of our own blindness and imperfection; for the declarations of the Gospel are sure; their answer must be found in the grace of God in Christ Jesus, for his mercies are infallible. Wherever there is disappointment, we may be assured that it is not because he is wanting to us, but because we are wanting to ourselves.

The prophet's expression, "the iniquity of our holy things," will not be thoroughly understood except by those who thus seriously dive into the recesses of their own heart, feel their deficiencies, mark their wanderings, detect and lament their vain imaginations and impertinent thoughts. It is to be regretted that these worldly trifles are far more apt to intrude on us in prayer, than the devout affections excited by prayer are to follow us into the world. Business and pleasure break in on our devotions: when will the spirit of devotion mix with the concerns of the world?

You who lament the disappointment of your requests, suffer a few friendly hints. — Have you not been impatient because you receive not the things that you asked at your own time? How do you know, but that if you had persevered, God might have bestowed them in his time? He certainly would, had He not in His wisdom foreseen they would not have been good for you; and, therefore, in His mercy withheld them. Is there not some secret, unsuspected infidelity lurking behind such impatience? Is it not virtually say-

ing there is no God to hear, or that he is unfaithful to his promises? For is it not absolute impiety to insinuate an accusation that the Supreme Judge of men and angels is capable of injustice, or liable to error? God has pleasure in the prosperity of His children. He neither grants nor denies any thing which is not accurately weighed and measured; which is not exactly suited to their wants, if not to their request.

If we pray aright, it may please God, not only to grant that for which we pray, but that for which we do not pray. Supplicating for the best things, we may receive inferior and unrequested things, as was the case with Solomon in his prayer for wisdom. God will not forget our labour of love. If he does not seem to notice it at present, he may lay it by for a time when it may be more wanted.

In prayer we must take care not to measure our necessities by our desires: the former are few, the latter may be insatiable. A murmuring spirit is a probable cause why our petitions are not granted. He who murmurs, distrusts the truth of God; and from distrust to infidelity the distance is not great. The certain way to prevent our obtaining what we desire, or enjoying what we have, is to feel impatient at what we do not receive, or to make an improper use of what has been granted to our prayers.

Or you may perhaps address God with sinister and corrupt views; as if you had left his omniscience out of his attributes; as if you thought Him such an one as yourself: as if He might be

entrapped with the "secret ambush of a specious prayer." Your design in the application of the boon you solicit may not be for his glory. It may be the prayer of ambition, cloaked under the guise of more extensive usefulness; it may be the prayer of covetousness, under the pretext of providing for your family; it may be the prayer of injustice, a petition for success in some undertaking for yourself, to the circumvention of another's fairer claim. God, in mercy to our souls, refuses the gift which would endanger them.

Thus, then, if we ask and receive not, because we ask deceitfully or blindly, we must not wonder if our prayers are not answered. Or, if we obtain what we solicit, and turn it to a bad account, or to no account at all, we must not be surprised if Divine grace is withheld, or withdrawn.

The same ill results may be expected if we ask formally or carelessly. Who has not felt, that there is a kind of mechanical memory in the tongue, which runs over the form, without any aid of the understanding, without any concurrence of the will, without any consent of the affections? For do we not sometimes implore God to hear a prayer, to which we ourselves are not attending? And is not this presumptuously to demand from Him that attention, which we ourselves are not giving to our own requests, even while we are in the act of making them?

A mere superficial form, by lulling the conscience, hardens the heart. The task is performed; but in what manner, or to what result, is not en-

quired. Genuine prayer is the homage of the soul to God, and not an expedient to pacify Him.

If you observe the form, but forget the dispositions it is intended to produce, it is evident the end of such prayer is not answered. Yet be not so far discouraged by feeling no sensible effect from prayer as to discontinue it; it is still a right thing to be found in the way of duty.

But, perhaps, you neglect to implore the spirit of Christ towards the direction of your prayers, and His intercession for their acceptance. As there is no other name through which we can be saved, so there is no other through which we can be heard: we must not sever his mediation from his atonement. All His divine offices are not only in perfect harmony, but in inseparable union.* Or, perhaps, you have used the name of the Redeemer for form's sake, or as an accustomed close to your petitions, without imploring his efficacious grace in changing your heart, as well as in pardoning your sins.

Perhaps you think it a sufficient qualification for acceptable prayer, that you are always forming good intentions; now, though these make up the value of good actions, yet good intentions, not acted upon, when occasion invites and duty calls, will not lessen, but inflame the reckoning. For

* We observe with regret, that in many public forms of prayer, the aid of His mediation is much more frequently implored than the benefits of His death and merits. He is, indeed, our Divine Intercessor, but His mere intercession is not the whole source of our dependence on Him.

does it not look as if you had resisted the offer of that Holy Spirit, which had originally prompted the intention? And may it not induce him to withdraw his blessed influences, when they have been both invited and rejected?

Do you never, by unwholesome reading, fill the mind with images unfavourable to serious exercises? The children of the pure and holy God should feed on the bread of their Father's house, and not on the husks of the prodigal.

Do you never use profanely or lightly that name which is above every name? He who made the ear, shall he not hear; and if he has heard, during the day, his awful name used by the thoughtless as an expletive, or by the impious as an interjection, or by the presumptuous as an imprecation, will he in the morning be called on as a saviour, and in the evening as an intercessor?

But no profession of faith, however orthodox, no avowal of trust in Christ, however confident, no entreaty for the aid of the Spirit, however customary, will avail, if it be not such an influential faith, such a practical trust, such a living devotedness, as shall be productive of holiness of heart and life, as shall tend to produce obedience to the commands, and submission to the will, of God. This is an infallible test, by which you may try every doctrine, every principle of the Gospel. We do not mean the truth of them, for that is immutable; but your own actual belief, your own actual interest in them. If no such effects are visible, we deceive ourselves, and the principles

we profess are not those by which we are governed.

Prayer is so obviously designed to humble the proud heart of the natural man, by giving him a feeling sense of his misery, his indigence, and his helplessness, that we should be unwilling to believe, that even the proudest man can carry his pride to the Throne of Grace, except to supplicate deliverance from it; yet such a character is actually drawn by Him who knew the thoughts and intents of the heart of man; and a little consideration will teach us, that the "two men who went up into the temple to pray" were not intended as individual portraits, but as specimens of a class.

The proud man does not, perhaps, always thank God that he is not guilty of adultery or extortion, to which vices he may have little temptation; nor does he glory in paying tithes and taxes, to which the law would compel him. Yet is he never disposed, like the Pharisee, to proclaim the catalogue of his own virtues? to bring in his comparative claims, as if it were a good thing to be better than the bad? Is he never disposed to carry in his eye (as if he would remind his Maker of his superiority) certain persons who are possibly less the objects of Divine displeasure than he, by his pride and selfishness, may have rendered himself; although his regularity in the forms of devotion may have made him more respectable in the world than the poor reprobated being whom he praises God he does not resemble? It is the lowly abasement, the touching self-condemnation,

the avowed poverty, the pleaded misery of the destitute beggar that finds acceptance. It is the hungry whom God's mercy fills with good things, it is the rich in his own conceit, whom his displeasure sends empty away.

Whenever you are tempted to thank God that you are not like other men, be grateful for your temporal advantages; compare your own condition with that of the afflicted and the bereaved among your own friends; compare yourself with the paralytic on his couch, with the blind beggar by the way-side, with the labourer in the mine; think on the wretch in the galleys; on the condemned in the dungeons of despotic governments; on the miserable beings in our own prisons, those loathsome abodes of sin and wretchedness. Above all, think, and this is the intolerable acme of sin in the inflictor, and of misery in the sufferer; think on the wretched negro chained in the hold of a slave-ship! Think seriously on these, and put pride into your prayer if you can. Think on these, not to triumph in your own superiority, but to adore the undeserved mercy of God, in giving you blessings to which you have no higher claim, and let your praise of yourself be converted into prayer for them.

For there are no dispositions of the heart which are more eminently promoted by prayer than contentment and patience. They are two qualities of the same colour, but of different shades, and are generally, when found at all, found in the same breast. Both are the offspring of genuine religion,

both nurtured by cordial prayer. The cultivation of the one, under easy circumstances, prepares for the exercise of the other under more trying situations. Both emanate from the same Divine principle, but are drawn out by different occasions, and exercised under varying circumstances.

Content is the tranquillity of the heart, prayer is its aliment: it is satisfied under every dispensation of Providence, and takes thankfully its allotted portion, never enquiring whether a little more would not be a little better; knowing, that if God had so judged, it would have been as easy for him to have given the more as the less. That is not true content, which does not enjoy as the gift of Infinite Wisdom what it has, nor is that true patience, which does not suffer meekly the loss of what it had, because it is not his will that it should have it longer.

The contentment of the irreligious man is apathy, his patience either pride or insensibility. The language of the patient man under trials is, It is the Lord: — shall a living man complain? is his interrogation. "A good man," says Solomon, "is satisfied from himself." Here the presumptuous might put in *his* claim to the title. But his pretension arises from his mistake, for his satisfaction is *with himself*, that of the Christian with Providence; it arises from the grace of God shed abroad in his heart, which is become a perennial spring of consolation and enjoyment; and which, by persevering prayer, is indented into his very soul. Content knows how to want and how to

abound: this is the language of equanimity: "Shall I not receive evil from the hand of the Lord, as well as good?" This is the language of patience. Content is always praising God for what she possesses; patience is always justifying Him for what she suffers. The cultivation of the one effectually prepares us for the exercise of the other. But these dispositions are not inherent in the human heart. How are they generated? by the influences of the Holy Spirit. How are they kept alive? by heart-felt devotion.

The prosperous man of the world, exulting in any recent success, may acknowledge, "The Lord gave;" but it is only Christian patience can say, "The Lord taketh away," and even bless him for the resumption of His gift; yet the contented, patient Christian, has the same keen feelings, the same fond attachments with other men, for, though his passions are regulated by religion, they are not totally extinguished.

Under the pressure of any affliction, *Thy will be done*, as it is the patient Christian's unceasing prayer, so is it the ground of his unvarying practice. In this brief petition he finds his whole duty comprised and expressed. It is the unprompted request of his lips, it is the motto inscribed on his heart, it is the principle which regulates his life, it is the voice which says to the stormy passions, "Peace! be still!" Let others expostulate, he submits. Nay, even submission does not adequately express his feelings. We frequently submit, not so much from duty as from

necessity; we submit, because we cannot help ourselves. Resignation sometimes may be mere acquiescence in the sovereignty, rather than conviction of the wisdom and goodness of God; while the patient Christian not only yields to the dispensation, but adores the dispenser. He not only submits to the blow, but vindicates the hand which inflicts it: "The Lord is righteous in all his ways." He refers to the chastisement as a proof of the affection of the chastiser. "I know that in very faithfulness thou hast caused me to be afflicted." He recurs to the thoughtlessness of his former prosperity. "Before I was afflicted, I went astray," and alludes to the trial less as a punishment than a paternal correction. If he prays for a removal of the present suffering, he prays also that it may not be removed from him, till it has been sanctified to him. He will not even part from the trial till he has laid hold on the benefit.

Perhaps the impediment which hinders the benefit of prayer in characters apparently correct may be the fatal habit of indulging in some secret sin, the private cherishing of some wrong propensity, the fondly entertaining of some evil imagination. Not being accustomed to control at other times, it intrudes, when you would willingly expel it; for a guest which is unreservedly let in at other seasons, and cordially entertained, will too frequently break in when you desire to be alone.

The Scriptures are explicit on this subject. It is not merely the committing actual sin that ruins

the comfort growing out of prayer; the Divine prohibition runs higher; its interdiction is more intimately interior; it extends to the thoughts and intents of the heart. The door of heaven is shut against prayer under such circumstances. "If I regard iniquity in my *heart*, the Lord will not hear me." A cherished corruption in the mind is the more likely to interpose between God and the soul, because it does not assume the shape and bulk of crime. A practical offence, the effect of sudden temptation, is more likely to be followed by keen repentance, deep self-abasement, and fervent application for pardon; whereas to the close bosom-sin, knowing that no human charge can be brought against it, the soul secretly returns with a fondness facilitated by long indulgence, and only whetted by a short separation. Vain, covetous, malignant, impure thoughts, habitually fostered by the imagination, are more likely to start out into action, are a more probable preparation for a bolder sin, than many who indulge them believe or intend.

It was, perhaps, this acute experimental feeling which led David to pray to be delivered from "secret sins;" these, he was probably conscious, had led to those "presumptuous sins" which had entangled his soul and embittered his life, and whose dominion he so freqently and fervently deprecates. This, it is to be feared, may be the case with some, whose language and exterior cause them to be ranked with the religious; these are, at least, the dangers to which they are most

exposed. It is, therefore, that our Lord connects, in indissoluble union, watching with prayer.

Perhaps when the conscience is more than usually awakened, you pray with some degree of fervour to be delivered from the guilt and punishment of sin. But if you stop here, your devotion is most imperfect. If you do not also pray to be delivered from its power and dominion over your heart and life, you do not go much farther than the heathens of old. They seem to have had a strong feeling of guilt, by their fond desire of expiating it by their sacrifices and lustrations.

Of their terror of its punishment we have many intimations in their fables; for what is fable to us was probably to them obscure history, or wild tradition worked up into an absurd but amusing mythology. The eternity of their punishments is strongly implied in the insatiable thirst and ungratified appetites of Tantalus; his misery augmented by that flowing water and those tempting fruits which hung in his sight and mocked his appetites, not unlike the anguish of Dives, which was rendered more intolerable by beholding the blessedness of those on the other side of the great gulf. The profitless toils of Sisyphus, and of the daughters of Danaus, whose ever-failing efforts prove their labours to be infinite, and their punishment eternal. The wheel of Ixion, which, as it was to be perpetually in motion, so the punishment was to have no end; a doctrine not so strongly held by many Christians, as it seems to be implied in this blind mythology.

Will you not then be most unweariedly fervent in prayer to the God of mercy, for deliverance from the *dominion* of that sin which, if not forsaken as well as lamented, will be inevitably followed by that punishment which you deprecate, and which will never end? But such is the love of present ease, and the desire of respite, that you think, perhaps, it is better not "to be tormented before the time." How many now in a state of irreversible misery wish they had been tormented sooner, that they might not be tormented for ever! But with you it is not yet too late. With you the day of grace, which to them is over, is not yet past. Use it then, without delay, instead of persisting in laying up fresh regrets for eternity.

But too many deceive themselves by imagining, that when they have pronounced their prayer the duty is accomplished with the task; the occult medicine being taken, the charm is to work of itself. They consider it as a duty quite distinct and unconnected with any other. They forget that it is to produce in them a principle which is to mix with all the occurrences of the day. Prayer, though not intended as a talisman, is yet proposed as a remedy. The effect of its operation is to be seen in subduing the passions, assisting to govern the temper, in bridling the tongue, in checking, not only calumny, but levity; not only impure, but vain conversation.

But we have a wonderful talent at deceiving ourselves. We have not a fault for which we do not find an apology. Our ingenuity on this head

is inexhaustible. In matters of religion men complain that they are weak; a complaint they are not forward to urge in worldly matters. They lament that their reluctance to pray arises from being unable to do what God, in his word, expects them to do. But is not this virtual rebellion, only with a smooth face and a soft name? God is too wise not to know exactly what we *can* do, and too just to expect from us what we *cannot*.

This pretence of weakness, though it looks like humility, is only a mask for indolence, and a skreen for selfishness.

We certainly *can* refuse to indulge ourselves in what pleases us, when we know it displeases God. We *can* obey his commandments with the aid of the infused strength which He has promised, and which we *can* ask. It is not He who is unwilling to give, but we who are averse to pray. The temptations to vice are strengthened by our passions, as our motives to virtue are weakened by them.

Our great spiritual enemy would not be so potent, if we ourselves did not put arms into his hands. The world would not be so powerful an enchantress, if we did not assist the enchantment, by voluntary yielding to it; by insensibly forsaking Him who is our strength. We make apologies for yielding to both by pleading their power and our own weakness. But the inability to resist is of our own making. Both enemies are, indeed, powerful, but they are not irresistible. If we assert the contrary, is it not virtually saying,

"Greater are they that are against us than He that is for us?"

But we are traitors to our own cause; we are conquered by our own consent; we surrender, not so much because the conqueror is powerful, as because the conquered is willing.

Without diminishing any thing of *His* grace and glory, to whom every good thought we think, every victory over sin we obtain, is owing; may it not add to our happiness, even in heaven, to look back on every conflict we maintained with our grand spiritual enemy, every triumph over the world, every victory over ourselves? Will not the remembrance of one act of resistance then far surpass every gratification now, which the three confederated enemies of our souls may present to us?

It is not merely by our prayers that we must give glory to God. Our Divine Master has expressly told us wherein His Father is glorified; it is "when we bring forth much fruit." It is by our works we shall be judged, and not by our prayers. And what a final consummation is it that obedience to the will of God, which is our duty here, shall be our nature hereafter! What is now our prayer shall then be our possesion; there the obligation to obey shall become a necessity, and that necessity shall be happiness ineffable.

The various evils here enumerated, with many others not touched upon, are so many dead weights on the wings of prayer; they cause it to gravitate to earth, obstruct its ascent, and hinder it from piercing to the throne of God.

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GOD OUR FATHER. — OUR UNWILLINGNESS TO PLEASE HIM. — FORMS OF PRAYER. — GREAT AND LITTLE SINS. — ALL SIN AN OFFENCE AGAINST GOD. — BENEFIT OF HABITUAL PRAYER.

THE distinction between the personal nature of Faith, and the universal character of Charity, as it is exercised in prayer, is specifically exhibited in the two pronouns which stand at the head of the Creed and of the Lord's Prayer. We cannot exercise faith for another, and therefore can only say *I* believe. But when we offer up our petitions, we address them to *our* Father, implying that He is the author, governor, and supporter not of ourselves only, but of his whole rational creation. It conveys also a beautiful idea of that boundless charity which links all mankind in one comprehensive brotherhood. The plural *us*, continued through the whole prayer, keeps up the sentiment with which it sets out, tends to exclude selfishness, and to excite philanthropy, by recommending to God the temporal as well as spiritual wants of the whole family of mankind.

The nomenclature of the Divinity is expressed in Scripture by every term which can convey ideas of grandeur or of grace, of power or of affection, of sublimity or tenderness, of majesty or benignity; by every name which can excite terror or trust, which can inspire awe or consolation.

But of all compellations by which the Supreme Being is designated in his holy word, there is not one more soothing, more attractive, more endearing than that of FATHER; it includes the idea of reconcilement, pardon, acceptance, love. It swallows up His grandeur in His beneficence. It involves also the inheritance belonging to our filial relation. It fills the mind with every image that is touching, and the heart with every feeling that is affectionate. It inspires fear softened by love, and exhibits authority mitigated by gratitude. The tenderest image the Psalmist could select from the abundant storehouse of his rich conceptions, to convey the kindest sentiment of God's pity towards them that fear Him, was that it resembles the pity of a "father for his *own children*." In directing us to pray to our Father, our Divine Master does not give the command without the example. He every where uses the term He recommends. "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth!" And in the 17th of St. John he uses this endearing name no less than seven times.

"Lord, show us the Father and it sufficeth," was the ill-understood prayer of the enquiring disciples. To us this petition is granted before it is made. Does He not show himself to all as a Father in the wonders of his creation, in the wonders of our being, preservation, and support? Has He not, in a more especial manner, revealed Himself to us as a Father in the sublime wonders of his word, in the unsearchable riches of Christ,

and the perpetuated gift of the Holy Spirit? Does he not show Himself our Father, if, when we have done evil, He withholds his chastening hand; if, when we have sinned, He still bears with us; if, when we are deaf to his call, He repeats it; if, when we delay, He waits for us; if when we repent, He pardons us; if, when we return, He receives us; if, when in danger, He preserves us from falling; and if, when we fall, He raises us?

We have a beautiful illustration of the goodness of God as a merciful and tender Father in the deeply-affecting parable of the Prodigal Son. Though the undone spendthrift knew that he had no possible claim on the goodness he had so notoriously offended, yet he felt that the endearing name of Father had an eloquence that might plead for forgiveness of his offence, though he feared not for restoration to affection and favour. But while he only meekly aspired to a place among the servants, while he only humbly pleaded for a little of their redundant bread, he was received as a pardoned, reconciled, beloved child.

Yet the human heart is not easily warmed into gratitude, nor softened into love, nor allured to imitation, because it takes only slight and transient views of the Divine benignity. What God has done for us, and what we have really done against ourselves, will, in the great day of decision, crown Him with glory, and ourselves with shame What we think we do for our own benefit in temporal concerns is so animated, so earnest, so unremitted;

— what we are called to do for God — which ultimately, indeed, would be done for ourselves — is so little, so reluctant, so heartless, as to bear no sort of comparison. In the former case, every thing is a gratification; in the latter, every thing is a sacrifice.

We think much of the smallest instance of self-denial, if it be for God; if it be an act of acknowledgment to the most gracious of all Fathers; if it be a tribute of homage to the King of kings, however large or lasting the promised recompense. But we think little of any present privation of our own, if it insure to us a longer subsequent enjoyment, though but for a short season. "God," says a pious writer, "is more easily imitated by his children, in the perfections in which he appears to us as a Father, than in those in which he appears a God." And yet it is in his inimitable perfections that we seek most to imitate him. We had rather resemble him in his independence and his power than in his beneficence and his love and his forgiveness, yet it is in these last that we are commanded to copy him.

In speaking of the manner in which we should address our heavenly Father, it is to be observed, there may be evident differences in the state, both of the mind and circumstances, for which the best written forms of prayer can make no provision. We ourselves can alone know those varieties, and the petitions which expressly belong to them. We are sometimes under the influence of particular tempers which we wish to cultivate and improve;

in this case we shall naturally use addresses very different from those which the prevalence of unfavourable tempers or wrong dispositions require.

As to the outward events in which we are concerned, — for *accident* is a term which has no place in the Christian's vocabulary,— God in every dispensation is at work for our good. In more prosperous circumstances, He tries our gratitude; in mediocrity, our contentment; in misfortunes, our submission; and as every new situation calls into exercise some new virtue, by consequence it calls for some alteration in the mode of our devotions. The prayers of yesterday and to-day will consequently be as different as the circumstances — these are some of the advantages of private over public prayer.

The great and general topics are, however, of a fixed, unalterable nature; on which, though we may be more or less diffuse, according to the state of the mind, yet the tenour and spirit will require little variation. This is more especially the case with respect to praise and thanksgiving; and to express these, the use of stated forms may occasionally come in with much advantage, as the cardinal points to be expressed here must be ever the same. Invariably must the glory and honour of whatever is good be ascribed to the great Source of light and life, the Giver of every good and perfect gift; and the addition in secret of particular clauses of praise for personal mercies will not be difficult to find where gratitude is really felt.

A deep sense of his corruptions will powerfully draw the real penitent to an humbling avowal of sin in prayer; but it is to be feared that there are some, who, because they cannot charge themselves with flagrant offences, do not consider a contrite confession of the sins of the heart, and of the daily life, an indispensable part of their devotions. But God will charge many with sin who neglect to charge themselves. Did they attend to the remonstrances of a conscience not laid asleep by neglect, or quieted by palliatives, they would find, that, were the daily *omissions* alone, of even their best days, registered and presented to them, they would form no inconsiderable catalogue for repentance.

There are too many who do not consider that all sins are equally a breach of the Divine law. Without pretending to bring all sins, small and great to one common level, we should remember that *all* sin is an offence against a gracious Father.

In that profoundly self-abasing prayer of David, after the commission of the two black offences which disgraced his otherwise exemplary life; though he deeply felt his barbarous treatment of his brave general, in first dishonouring his wife, and then exposing him to meet inevitable death in the fore-front of the hottest battle, — yet, in praying to be delivered from this blood guiltiness, he bequeathed an important lesson to posterity, when, in his lowly prostration at the throne of God, his first cry was, " Against *Thee, Thee* only, have I

sinned, and done this evil in *Thy* sight," plainly declaring, that all sin is, in the first instance, a sin against God.

While the most worldly are ready enough to exclaim against notorious sins, or against any sins carried to the greatest excess, to smaller offences they contrive to be tolerably reconciled. They think the commission of these not inconsistent with the profitable use of prayer in their formal way of using this customary exercise.

They are also sufficiently lenient to certain degrees of great sins; and various are the modifications and distinctions in their logic, and not over-correct the gradations in their moral scale of degrees. They do not consider that it is the extirpation, and not merely the reduction, of any sin, which is to procure them that peace and comfort for which they sometimes pray, and which they wonder they do not receive as an answer to their prayers.

They forget that the evil of sin is not to be measured by its magnitude only, but by the spirit of disobedience which it indicates towards a generous father, — a Father whose commands are all founded in mercy and love, and who considers every voluntary fault as no light offence when committed against supreme power, exercised with perfect tenderness.

But it is their reluctance to part with the remaining degrees, their wish to retain these modified sins; it is their favourite reserves to which they still cling, that prevent that peace which is pro-

mised to the victory, I had almost said to the omnipotence, of prayer.

For it is not so much the nicely measured quantity, as the nature of sin which constitutes its malignity, and obstructs the benefit of prayer. The inferior degree which is cherished, will, without earnest supplication to God, be ready to become the excess which is deprecated, whenever the appropriate temptation shall present itself. For, however our compassionate Father may pardon the unpremeditated fault, yet how can we expect Him to forgive any degree of sin that is allowed, that is even, in a certain measure, intended to be committed? Diminution, however, is a favourable step, if, by perseverance in prayer, it lead gradually to extirpation.

Habitual prayer may prove a most effectual check to any doubtful or wrong action, to which circumstances may invite us during the day on which we are entering; — the very petition to our heavenly Father, "Deliver us from evil," forcibly felt and sincerely expressed, may preserve us from being seduced into it. And is not the praying Christian less likely to "fall into temptation," than they who neglect to pray that they may not be led into it?

The right dispositions of the heart, and the fervour of devotion reciprocally excite each other. A holy temper sends us to prayer, and prayer promotes that temper. Every act of thanksgiving tends to make us more grateful, and augmented gratitude excites more devout thanksgiving.

The act of confession renders the heart more contrite, and deeper contrition induces a more humbling avowal of sin. Each, and all, send us more cordially to the Redeemer; the more fervent the prayer, the more entire is the prostration of the whole man at the foot of the cross.

THE DOCTRINE OF IMPUTED SANCTIFICATION, NEWLY ADOPTED. — THE OLD ONE OF PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION, NEWLY REJECTED. — THE ADOPTION OF THE ONE AND THE REJECTION OF THE OTHER HOSTILE TO PRAYER. — ST. PAUL'S CHARACTER.

We have hitherto spoken of errors in prayer. We come now to errors of opinion which supersede the necessity of prayer itself. There are moral as well as speculative corruptions gaining ground amongst us, and there is an involution of one in the folds of the other. When men once indulge themselves in any deviation from the course so plainly marked out, in that only unerring directory, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, they can never be sure whither the first turning off may lead them.

When a man, with more ingenuity than sober judgment, wishes to introduce a novel error; in order to work successfully, and prevent the suspicion of his design, he commonly seizes on some acknowledged truth for his basis. On this truth he raises his own fanciful superstructure, but with little departure, at first, from the avowed design; so that his gradual deviation from it makes the error continue still to look so much like truth, that ordinary observers will not easily detect where the old truth ends, or where the new fabrication begins, and totally changes the character of the original edifice.

The great and glorious doctrine of the New Testament was to exalt the Saviour and to humble the sinner; the new doctrine is to exalt the sinner also, and in that proportion to establish and secure him in sin. For if the Saviour's righteousness, by transfer, becomes so far the believer's righteousness, as to become, in the new language, his own personal holiness, he has in his own person "whereof to glory," and any further attainment is anomalous; or at best this transfer is even less rational and evidently more removed from common sense as well as from charity, than the doctrine of supererogation itself; for that only teaches that some men were rich in good works enough, and to spare; but this, instead of the friendly disposal of such superfluous wealth, teaches that we have none worth keeping, and that if we had, there is a provision made for rendering it utterly useless.

A distorted truth, then, is worse than an original falsehood, because it deceives the injudicious and ill informed by retaining some little vestige of the truth they had been taught to venerate. Thus, they who pretend to add new glory to the character and offices of Christ, are in effect dishonouring by misrepresenting him. It is a fearful fact, that the holiest doctrine may be perverted, till, instead of its being the source of salvation, it becomes a fountain of impiety. Instead of humbling the sinner, it confirms him in sin; instead of purifying, it corrupts; instead of sobering, it inebriates; and lands him on a daring and presumptuous confidence. Instead of promoting the cause of God,

as it professes, it advances that of Satan. It is a false light which leads to utter darkness; for "if the light which is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"

This error is so much worse than any other sin, as, by fair and legitimate deduction, it renders all virtue anomalous, and, consequently, all prayer ridiculous. Virtue cannot be needed, where to be like-minded with Christ is replaced, or made synonymous with having his holiness substituted for our own; and prayer cannot be upheld in any one of its essential qualities, where no room is left in the heart for self-distrust, meekness, lowliness of spirit, the fear of offending God, and the sense of dependence on him for "more grace."

Much has also been advanced in favour of another kindred doctrine, a doctrine with which St. Peter must have been utterly unacquainted, when he exhorted his converts to "GROW in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ." St. Paul could not have heard of it when he said to the Thessalonians, "I am bound to thank God that your faith GROWETH exceedingly." The preceding opinion having encouraged the new proselytes, for they can create as well as destroy, has called another into existence, *that there is no such thing as progressive sanctification.* This novel doctrine, if practically adopted, would not fail to contribute its full share to the extermination of any remains of moral goodness, which its precursor might have left behind. It may, indeed, deserve some little toleration, when its founder shall have been able

to produce one individual child of Adam, who is already as good as he ought to be, or even as he might have been.

If this doctrine be true, a large portion of Scripture must be abandoned to the clippers and mutilators of the sacred volume; for what becomes of the gracious promise of being "renewed from day to day?" what of the precept, "to increase and abound more and more?" what of the incessant inculcation of this command, repeated in all the various forms which language could supply? A command of which neither the variety of the illustration, nor of the language which conveys it, ever alters the idea; an idea which, like a golden thread, runs through the whole fabric of the New Testament.

We have been accustomed to hear that fervent prayer, through the influence of the Divine Spirit, is the grand instrument of this renewal; and it is on this ground that we have ventured to introduce the subject here, as connected with the general design of these pages. But the present doctrine completes what the former had commenced, and renders prayer wholly inapplicable to all spiritual ends; it leaves us nothing to implore but merely temporal advantages; nothing to ask, but things only which will end when this life ends. It would abolish the necessity of every petition in the Lord's Prayer, except that for our daily bread.

Why will not those who profess to make the Bible the only rule of their faith and practice, learn from that Bible, that diffidence and reverential awe,

that frank avowal of their own ignorance, that humble withholding from intruding into unrevealed things, and that devout gratitude for the glorious things which are revealed, which best become blind, ignorant, and dependent creatures?

If this newly-invented doctrine were true, what would become of the useless interval of life? Useless, as to all possibility of improvement, which is the great end of life. What of the interval between the decisive moment of complete sanctification and our closing scene?

The unanswerable argument in favour of progressive holiness, is the progress itself. The man to whom it was asserted, that there was no such thing as motion, made the most definitive answer, — he got up and walked.

Every advance of the Christian inclines him to push on to still further advances. But under the influence of this stationary principle, the busy current of life would become a stagnant pool. It is motion which gives the sense of spiritual, as well as of natural, life. It is progress which gives the sustaining feeling, not of independent, but of infused, strength. Hope, which is the pulse of spiritual life, would not only intermit, but stand still. "Is this all?" would the disappointed Christian say. "Shall I never be more holy than I now am? I do not find the right sort of rest in being a fixture." Torpor is not ease, numbness is not relief. It is exercise, not indolence, which induces safe and wholesome repose.

New difficulties, fresh trials, unknown tempt-

ations, may yet assail us in our mortal journey, which will require new applications to the Throne of Grace for support. With that support promised to prayer, though "Alps on Alps arise," we need not be discouraged. For if our progress be an upward, it is an onward path, and the acclivity diminishes the higher we ascend. Difficulties may be great, but, with the grace of God, they will not be insuperable. God is not only strong, but Strength. Yet, let us not aim at an ascent above our promised support. In aspiring to reach a visionary elevation, we lose the height we had actually gained.

It is curious to observe, how naturally one invention involves another. We find an instructive illustration of this truth in a pagan fable. Dædalus was not only made a prisoner himself in the labyrinth of his own projecting, but, like the projectors of the new theological metaphysics, he was no sooner involved in its mazes, than he went on to study a new and still wilder contrivance. But his next invention, his wings of wax, in which he trusted to secure his flight, in their ultimate result betrayed their insufficiency. His incautious companion, by mounting above the prescribed region of safety, exposed his artificial wings to be melted by the sun, as a punishment for approaching it too nearly. His fate was the inevitable consequence of his temerity.

If we were completely and instantaneously sanctified, such a state would boldly contradict the character of our human condition, every where

described in Scripture, namely, that life is to the end a journey, a conflict, a race, a warfare; whereas, in the new scheme, all would be instant peace; the Christian would have no more to tempt, no more to fear, no more to resist; in short, as to security, earth would be heaven.

Every thing that is great is progressive. The noblest things are the longest in attaining their perfection. This analogy subsists in nature, and in grace. Surely, then, there is no assignable period, when our virtues will be incapable of addition; when our duties will be finished; when our piety will have soared to such a pitch as to render a higher elevation impossible, as to render prayer not only unnecessary but absurd.

Saint Paul's conversion was, indeed, instantaneous, but it was miraculous. Yet, though it was attended with circumstances peculiar to itself; though the shining light from heaven surrounded him; though, to evidence the miracle, he heard the voice of the Lord Jesus himself; though his natural sight was taken from him, preparatory to the opening of his spiritual eyes; though his change was of this distinguished character, yet did he stop short there? So far from it, he only began to cry out, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to *do?*" Thus we see, that the instantaneous conversion was prayer; practical prayer; prayer which involved doing; prayer which denoted progress.

If ever progressive sanctification was exhibited in the life as well as writings, of any one man more than another, it was in this heroic champion

of Divine truth. If ever one man more than another had a right to depend on his own safe state, it was the divinely illuminated Saint Paul.

Yet did *he* spend his after-life in self-satisfaction and indolent security? Did *he* ever cease to watch, or pray, or labour? Did *he* ever cease to press the duty of prayer on his most established converts? Did *he*, in the confidence of supremely eminent gifts, ever cease himself to pray? Were *his* exertions ever abridged; *his* self-denial ever diminished? Did *he* rest satisfied with present, though supernatural attainments? Did *he* remember the things which were behind? Did *he* live upon the good he had already done, or the grace he had already received? Did *he* count himself to have attained? Did *he* stop in the race set before him? Did not he press forward? Did not his endeavours grow with his attaiments? Did not his humility and sense of dependence outstrip both? If *he* feared being a castaway, after the unutterable things he had seen and heard, and after the wonders he had achieved, shall the best man on earth be contented to remain as he is? If it were attempted, the most sanguine man on earth would find it to be impossible; nothing either in nature or in grace "continueth in one stay." He who does not advance is already gone back. This glorious, because humble, apostle went on in progressive sanctification, he continued to grow and to pray, till he at length attained to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

But what enabled this unparalleled man to

maintain to the end this painful conflict? It was the same support which is still offered to the meanest Christian. It was humble, fervent, persevering prayer. It was the spirit of supplication, infused and sustained by "the renewing of the Holy Ghost," and presented through the Divine Mediator.

And what the apostle did in his own person, we repeat, he unweariedly pressed upon all his converts. He exhorted them to pray for themselves, and for each other, in the same spirit in which "he bowed his own knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they might be strengthened with might by his spirit in the inner man; — that Christ might dwell in their hearts by faith; — that they might be rooted and grounded in love; — that they might know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge; — that they might be filled with all the fulness of God."

It is obvious why God does not give us the full measure of his grace; it is in order that we may be induced to pray for it; and that prayer which we are commanded continually to repeat for greater degrees of grace is a standing proof of that imperfection in us which requires it; is a perpetual intimation, that we stand in need of fresh supplies, and larger measures of this superinduced strength than we have yet attained.

A sincere Christian must know, because he must feel, that he is an imperfect Christian; and to rest satisfied in a state of imperfection is not "fighting the good fight," is not "finishing our

course" in the way our beginning promised. As we advance, Providence assigns us new employments, new trials. Sanctification will never have reached its ultimate point, without that persevering progress which the Scriptures every where inculcate. Do we not rob ourselves of the reward promised to those who strive to go on unto perfection, if we are stopped short by the fatal delusion, that we have already reached it?

There is a fearful denunciation in the Apocalypse, and it is made the closing passage of the sacred canon; it is made a fence, as it were, to shield Divine truth from the additions and mutilations of bold intruders; no less than a tremendous menace, that "to him who adds unto these things, God shall add to him the plagues written in this book. To him that takes away, God shall take away his part out of the book of life."

CHARACTER OF THOSE WHO EXPECT SALVATION FOR THEIR GOOD WORKS. — OF THOSE WHO DEPEND ON A CARELESS NOMINAL FAITH. — BOTH THESE CHARACTERS UNFAVOURABLE TO PRAYER. — CHRISTIANITY A RELIGION OF LOVE, WHICH DISPOSES TO PRAYER, EXHIBITED IN A THIRD CHARACTER.

We proceed now to make some observations on two different classes of Christians, who, without neglecting prayer, obstruct its efficacy by certain opinions in immediate connection with their practice; opinions, which, though in direct opposition to each other, yet, if Christianity be true, are neither of them safe.

The one, with a pretence of faith, profess to know God; but in works, in a great measure, deny him; the other are working out their own salvation, but it is without fear or trembling; they work in their own strength, without looking unto God to enable them "to will and to do of his good pleasure."

While multitudes are ruining themselves by a fatal reliance on the merit of their own works, it is, perhaps, not saying too much to asssert that more are undone by a loose, traditional, unexamined dependence on the Saviour. If many are wrong who think to purchase heaven by their own industry, more err by this cheaper mode of an

indefinite and careless reliance on the ill-understood promises of the Gospel. If we cannot, of these two evils, determine which is greater, it would not be difficult to prove that both are equally unfavourable to fervent prayer.

The careless liver, who trusts in an unfounded hope, deceives himself, because he thinks his trust, though he never enquires into it, looks more like grace.

Good works are rather less likely to deceive always, because those who maintain their superiority as a doctrine cannot but see how far they fall themselves, in practice, short of their profession; so far as to render it evident, that good works are, with much greater sedulity, performed by that sound class of Christians, who utterly reject any confidence in the performance of them. The former make salvation the easiest possible acquisition; the other believe it to be difficult, but fancy that the difficulty is to be overcome by a few more good deeds; which, shall we say, is the more misleading opinion?

Yet it must be confessed, that in this age of speculative religion, many do not sufficiently insist on these indispensable indications of a true and lively faith. For, after all, are not the right actions of a consistently holy life the most unequivocal outward signs of an inward and spiritual grace? Not to insist on them, is to despise the real value of those substantial evidences which our Lord himself made the criterion by which to judge of men, — "by their fruits ye shall know them."

The tree of life is no barren tree; it bears all manner of fruits.

There is, indeed, less necessity than ever to decry good works. Men are not so violently addicted to them, as, by the warnings given against them, one might be led to suppose. To exalt good works as the procuring cause of salvation, is to put them in the place of Christ. To depreciate good works, is to depreciate such a life as Christ has given us both the command and the example to lead; that command, of which the language was always one, "if ye love me, keep my commandments;" and that example which presents such a tissue of holy actions as nothing but Divinity could exhibit, yet enlightened and assisted humanity may and must aspire to imitate.

With this command and this example, devotion was always indissolubly connected. Previously to giving his Divine pattern for the due performance of prayer, he alluded to the actual duty as already well understood and regularly practised; for doubtless he had habituated them to the duty, before he said, "*When* ye pray," — "After *this manner* therefore pray you."

Faith is the principle which first led the sinner to apply for grace and mercy to the Redeemer of sinners. It is the same principle, which, by its gradual operation, leads to the renewing of his nature, the purifying of his heart, and the sanctifying of his conduct. This faith, with its practical consequences, must be sought for, by the only means through which it can be obtained, the in-

fluence of the Holy Spirit on humble, fervent, spiritual prayer.

But there is another, and, it is to be feared, a large class, who do good without being good. Though this may be too frequently the case; though it is the motive which determines on the quality of the action; yet, if the best action will not save the best man, there is little hope of its efficacy towards the salvation of a bad one.

Perhaps the man in question is charitable; but his charity may be stimulated by his vanity — a too common, but most misleading motive. Perhaps he does a deed of bounty from the too usual hope, that this good action may be thrown into the opposite scale against a bad one; perhaps he hopes that his acts of benevolence may atone for the irregularities of a disorderly life; but, be this as it may, do not discourage his giving; let him continue to give, the act may improve the principle; he may in time detect the difference of his internal feelings in the performance of a good and a bad action. Perhaps the repetition of his good deeds may lead to a diminution of his bad ones. The passion of shame sometimes operates usefully, and every passion being under the control of God, may eventually be made the instrument of good.

And who does not remember instances in which the frequently repeated bounty was the unprompted feeling of a large, compassionate, and liberal heart, of a heart tender and kind, though yet unsanctified by religion?

Yet, who would restrain the right action? Who would forbid the gentle deed of charity? Who would wish to aggravate his, perhaps, already awful account, by withholding his hand? Who would willingly add this omission of what is right to his aggregate sum of what is wrong? Who would not even hope that it may prove a leading step to what is better? Who would not hope that, as good principles naturally tend to good actions, yet, though it is reversing the usual order, for the stream to lead back to the fountain, who knows but the repetition of good actions may not only deter him from such as are bad, but may put his mind into such a frame as may lead him to examine the true principle of action, and thus to find, that though he has unhappily begun at the wrong end, the right end is not even yet unattainable? Who can say that he may not be brought to examine his own heart, and be thus brought to the exercise of cordial prayer? By that he will be taught to know, that "if any man will do the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God."

Our compassionate Redeemer cherished every hopeful appearance. When he saw some symptoms of goodness in the young ruler, "He loved him." But his amiableness was not religion. Though his obedience to the commandments was less defective than that of many a high professor; like others, who confidently trust in their own merit, he enquired, not, it is to be feared, so much for improvement, as from a sense of conscious

integrity and the hope of commendation, — he enquired what was yet wanting to the perfection of his character.

He who knew all things, already knew that his love of money was greater than his love of God. Here he saw that this promising character was vulnerable. The one thing he wanted was more than the many things he possessed. He failed in the trial. He had some concern about his soul, but more about his money: "he went away sorrowing," because he could not secure the one without the sacrifice of the other.

This is, with *us*, as much a test of character now, as it was then. It is not until we see a man acting in direct opposition to his predominant sin that we can venture to hope that he is renewed in the spirit of his mind, that he has even got on right ground. Zaccheus, who probably set out worse than the ruler, obtained this grand victory which the other missed.

This promising young man, in proclaiming his obedience to the commands, did not, however, boast of his devotion; yet, in so moral a character, we cannot suppose that prayer was altogether neglected; but it must have been that prayer of which our Lord says, "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me." Had it been sincere prayer, it would have been influential prayer. No slave to avarice *can* worship God in spirit and in truth; and it is such that the Father seeketh to worship him. While the heart remains

unchanged, the temper unsanctified, and the life unfruitful, the prayer has not been "the effectual fervent prayer, which availeth much."

But there is a third character, who, thinking both the others lately noticed to be wrong, is determined himself to be right. He divides the difference, and adopts half of the scheme of each. He approves of works, but doubts their unassisted efficacy to obtain salvation. He honours the Redeemer, and places confidence in His sacrifice; but it is not a full, entire, unmeasured confidence. He thinks the Saviour so far competent towards effecting part of his salvation, that he cannot be saved without Him, but dares not trust Him with the whole. So, without intending to be profane, he enters into a kind of partnership with Him whose blood was made a full, perfect, and sufficient oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. He proposes to contribute his own share to a contract of his own making, trusting that, as the Saviour knows he is not perfect, He will graciously supply whatever is deficient in his services, and make up what is lacking to their perfection, he himself continuing to be the working partner.

But, if he be a thinking and a feeling character, if he be sincere in his desire after Divine truth, though ignorant of its true nature, he at length begins to find that the plan, which he once thought so admirably contrived, does not answer. He finds that his spiritual interests do not advance. He begins to discover that his faith is cold, even

his work is sluggish, and its progress unsatisfactory. His exertions want the inspiring principle; they want a genuine faith. He begins to discover, that even his good actions, on which he had been accustomed to rest half his salvation, are exceeded by those persons who do more, and put no trust in them.

He at length, through the influence of Divine grace, begins to discover, or rather to feel, that while one party is exclusively exalting faith, and the other works, both seem to have forgotten, or rather not to have known, that there is a third, a heavenly principle, a sacred cement, without which their separation might be eternal, and even their junction would be imperfect. The sacred principle is LOVE. He now knows, experimentally, that Christianity is a religion of the affections, a sentiment of the heart; that it demands and confers that charity, without which faith is dead, and works are vain. It is that heavenly sentiment, the love of God in Christ shed abroad in the heart, without which he that liveth is counted dead; that principle, without which the gift of prophecy, of mysteries, and all knowledge, were unavailing; without which, giving all the goods to the poor, and even the body to be burned, will not profit; it is that indestructible attribute, which, when prophecies shall fail, and tongues shall cease, and knowledge vanish away, will *never* fail; it is that perfect thing which shall subsist when "that which is in part shall be done away." Love will survive when faith shall become sight, and hope shall be fruition.

It shall constitute our happiness when we shall know God, "even as we are known." We shall possess it in its plenitude, when we shall awake up after His likeness. For love, like every other holy disposition, is but an emanation of the perfections of God, a spark from the original flame, an assimilation to his nature, *since God is love.*

In faith there may be fear; in works there may be constraint; but the inspiring, invigorating, endearing principle of love changes the fearful slave into the affectionate child; transforms *Him*, whom we had degraded as a hard master, into a tender father. This love makes labour light, service freedom, dependence safety, duty delight, sufferings easy, obedience pleasure, submission choice. By the warmth with which he now cultivates this "unction from the Holy One," he will be rendered more meet for that fulness of joy which is at God's right hand for evermore.

He has now completely found his own utter insufficiency for this great work. He is in the situation of the newly converted apostle, who had doubless previously exercised a regular but formal devotion; but it never could have been said of him till then, "Behold, he prayeth!" He begins with lowly prostration to besiege the throne of grace; he now prays with a fervour he never felt before. He goes on to feel, not only its necessity but its efficacy; gradually acknowledges its transforming power, and, in time, becomes sensible that its consolations are neither few nor small.

He now sees objects with other eyes; the visual

ray is purged; to his rectified optics, "trees are become men." He now exclaims, "Not of works, lest any man should boast." But though he has left off boasting, he is so far from having left off working, that he is far more active in good deeds, than when he trusted they would carry him to heaven; superinduced humility has completely let him into the secrets of his own heart. He feels wants and desires of which he was never before sensible; and wants felt readily find a tongue, readily suggest unbidden prayer, unprompted praise. Prayer is become the very breath of his being; praise is so much his delight, that he almost forgets it is his duty. It is no longer his task, but his refreshment. What lately seemed a necessary drudgery, the severe injunction of a hard master, is now the pleasant service of an affectionate son.

He is deeply grieved at the time he has lost, but he is no less disposed to retrieve than to lament the past. He has found that the soul will not be saved where the heart is not renewed. Of that renewal by the influence of the Divine Spirit, he is become more and more sensible in his devotional exercises. With a deeper sense of imperfection as he becomes less imperfect, he is yet sensible of new dispositions, of new energies, of a heart to trust, and a will to obey. He feels an increasing desire of conformity to his Divine Saviour, and such a growth in grace, that with him to will and to do is almost become the same thing.

All the faculties which God has given him are filled with the idea of God: he retains Him in his

memory, by the recollection of his mercies: he retains Him in his understanding, by meditating on His perfections. By this intelligent faculty he reflects on what God is in himself, in His word, and to His own soul. In his will, he loves God, and laments that he ever loved any thing in comparison of Him. Thus all his intellectual powers, voluntarily, as it were, press into the worship of God, or, in the fewer and better words of the Psalmist, he summons them all to assist in his devotions, saying, "Let all that is within me praise the Lord."

PRAYER. — THE CONDITION OF ITS ATTENDANT BLESSINGS. — USELESS CONTENTION ABOUT TERMS.

MEN contend more about words than about things. A misunderstanding respecting them causes more disputes than the subjects of which they are the signs. In speaking, for instance, of the connection between prescribed duties and promised blessings, are there not certain inoffensive and well-meaning words which seem to have brought more reproach on those who use them than their harmless, if not legitimate, characters, may be thought to deserve? One of them, indeed, might expect more gentle treatment on the single ground, that it is very frequently to be found in the Holy Scriptures.

The obnoxious terms to which we here allude are *rewards* and *conditions*. We have, in general, avoided the use of them; not for any harm discoverable in them when used and understood in the scriptural sense, but for fear of creating an idea contrary to what was intended to be conveyed. In the legal sense they are very exceptionable; for in the one case we deserve nothing from God, and in the other we can do nothing of ourselves.

We do not presume to make conditions with God, but He condescends to propose them to us. In this latter case, it is free grace imposes the

reasonable condition: it is free grace bestows the unmerited reward. Are not all the promises of the Gospel conditional? The beatitudes include both the condition and the reward. Our blessed Saviour, in his sermon, multiplies, and individualises his promises. He gives us a string of articles of blessedness and recompense; the specific recompense to the specific duty: amongst others, mercy to the merciful; the kingdom of heaven to those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake; the vision of God to the pure in heart.

The Holy Spirit consecrates the doctrine of *rewards*, by teaching the apostle to connect it even with the very being of Omnipotence. "God *is*," and it immediately follows, that "he is a *rewarder* of them that seek him." Surely this is a condition, as much as the threat that he will punish those "who know not God." Every where, and particularly in the Psalms, prayer is made the condition of obtaining. In asking, seeking, and knocking, the condition and the reward most appropriately meet.

To those who come to the Redeemer, he has declared that "they shall in no wise be cast out." Their coming is the condition of their being accepted. "Rest," again, is the consoling promise which he makes to "the heavy laden" who come to him. "Him that honoureth me, I will honour," is both a condition and a reward. What is the promise of pardon to repentance, but a condition? The negative denunciation is a condition: — "Ye will *not* come to me, that ye might have life." —

"Without holiness no man shall see the Lord; without faith it is impossible to please God." Do not these imply the blessings attending the contrary temper? State the question thus: Shall we be heard, if we do not pray? Shall we be pardoned, if we do not repent?

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, the things' which God hath prepared for them that love him.' It is the love of God, then, which is the condition of obtaining those things which the heart of man cannot conceive.

All the promises made to faith are conditions, as are those made to holiness. The good and faithful servants who well employed their ten and five talents were rewarded by having their talents doubled: the punishment of their unprofitable companion was a conditional punishment. He had made no use of what was committed to him.

Why is that bright variety of promises, "to him that overcometh," repeated with such unwearied iteration, in the sublime visions of the saint at Patmos? What is it but a beautiful concatenation of conditions and rewards, closed with that joyful climax, "he that overcometh shall be a pillar in the temple of the Lord, and shall go no more out." If language more clear can be found, if assurances more explicit can be given, if promises more distinct can be produced, we confess we know not where to look for them. Did not Moses himself, the most disinterested of men, look to the recompense of the reward? And did not a greater

than Moses, " for the joy that was set before him, endure the cross, despising the shame?"

Promises like these were the support, and joy, and triumph, of his immediate apostles, and of their remotest successors, of Ridley, of Latimer, and Cranmer. They will still be the consolation of the Christian sufferer for righteousness' sake to the end of time. Let us not, then, forfeit our inheritance by slighting the promise.

" This is a *reward* wholly of grace, not in respect of our deserving; but of justice, on account of the purchase of it by the sacred treasure of Christ's blood, and the unchangeable tenour of the Gospel, wherein God promises heaven to all obedient and true believers."

The things may be called by other names, but they amount to the same meaning. There is a proud disinterestedness which would seem to intimate, that, because we deserve nothing, we expect nothing. Our expectation, it is true, arises entirely from God's goodness, and not at all from our merit. It arises especially from his fidelity, which leads him to make good his own engagement. He has Himself said, " Faithful is he that has promised."

This view of the subject deducts nothing from that free salvation purchased for us by the death of the Redeemer. We repeat, it deducts nothing from the sovereignty of God. All the promises are the gracious offers of an amnesty by an insulted King, who condescends to offer a treaty to his

rebellious subjects. We deserve nothing at his hands. He owes us nothing. Punishment we do indeed deserve, "if He were extreme to mark what is done amiss;" yet He declares, that punishment is his strange work. He has reversed the attainder, by the sacrifice of his Son. The attainted rebel, instead of disputing about the terms of reconciliation, instead of proposing terms of his own, thankfully accepts what the King offers. Though our pardon hangs on a firm belief in the great truths he has revealed, let us not so explain these as to hazard or neglect the duties he has enjoined us to perform. If our faith, though sincere, is often weak, let us remember, that our obedience is even more imperfect than our faith; and let us, by fervent and unremitting prayer, labour at once to build up our faith, which is weak, and to perfect our obedience, which is defective.

God not only pardons as a merciful King, He enacts laws as a wise legislator; still the old revolutionary principles are continually breaking out; to check which, the Sovereign proposes *terms* as proofs of our allegiance. He does by no means annex salvation to them, but He requires them as marks of our repentance, as confirmations of our loyalty. He requires them as evidences both of our faith and of our submission. By the infusion of a new spirit of life consequent on His pardon, the acquitted rebel adopts a new set of principles, which show themselves by overt acts, suggested and nourished by fervent prayer.

We are aware that the term "evidences," used

above, is to many no less revolting, than those which we have previously noticed, but by this excessive affectation of disinterestedness and refining on the promises, we shall come to do away all moral obligation, we shall attenuate the substantial realities of Christianity into a meagre theory, reduce the fruitful principle of practical religion to a dry and unproductive speculation, a barren thing, to which nothing that is perceptible, palpable, tangible, and practical, is necessarily appended. Christianity is substance as well as essence.

On the other hand, it is but too notorious, that the terms here humbly attempted to be vindicated and restored to their true signification, are too frequently made the sum, the entire whole, of religion, till the spirituality of the Gospel, and the great peculiarities of the religion of Jesus, are smothered in the heap of frigid human ethics.

It is by the promises annexed to these conditions, that the Christian is gradually brought to consider prayer, not merely as a duty, but to value it as a privilege; and the more earnestly he cultivates this spirit of supplication, the more deeply will it enable him to penetrate into the recesses of his own heart. The more he discovers the evils which he there finds, he will be so far from being deterred by the discovery, from approaching to the fountain of mercy, that it will lead him to be more diligent, as well as more fervent, in his application there. Nothing so

faithfully reveals to us our spiritual exigencies, nothing can quicken our petitions for their relief so powerfully, as the conviction of their actual existence. In this conviction, in this earnest application, the Christian at length feels the efficacy of prayer in its consolations, its blessedness, its transforming power.

VAIN EXCUSES FOR THE NEGLECT OF PRAYER. — THE MAN OF BUSINESS. — CASE OF NEHEMIAH. — PRAYER AGAINST THE FEAR OF DEATH. — CHARACTERS TO WHOM EARNEST PRAYER IS RECOMMENDED.

THERE are not a few, who offer apologies for the neglect of spiritual duties, by saying they believe them to be right, but that they are tempted to neglect the exercise of them by idleness or business, by company or pleasure. This may be true, but temptations are not compulsions. The great adversary of souls may fill the fancy with alluring images of enjoyment, so as to draw us away from any duty; but it is in our own choice to indulge, and through grace to repel them. He may act upon the passions through outward objects, which introduce them to the mind through the senses, but the grace of God enables all, who faithfully ask it, to withstand them.

If we were not at liberty to reject temptation, sin would be no sin. It is the offer of the grace of resistance not used, which makes the offender to be without excuse. All the motives and allurements to sin would be ineffectual, would we keep up in our minds what are its "wages" — death; death spiritual, death eternal!

Of all the excuses for the neglect of prayer, the man of business justifies his omission to himself by the most plausible apologies. Many of

this class, active for themselves, and useful to the world, are far from disputing either the propriety or the duty of prayer; they are willing, however, for the present, to turn over this duty to the clergy, to the idle, to women and children. They allow it to be an important thing, but not the most important. They acknowledge, if men have time to spare, they cannot spend it better; but *they* have no time. It is, indeed, a duty, but a duty not to be compared with that of the court, the bar, the public office, the counting-house, or the shop.

Now, in pleading for the importance of the one, we should be the last to detract from that of the other. We only plead for their entire compatibility.

We pass over the instance of Daniel, a man of business and a statesman, and of many other public characters, recorded in Scripture, and confine ourselves to the example of Nehemiah. He was not only an officer in the court of the greatest king of the East, but it was his duty to be much in the royal presence. He was, on a particular occasion, under deep affliction; for Jerusalem was in ruins! On a certain day, his sadness was so great, as to be visible to the king, at whose table he was attending.

The monarch enquired the cause of his sorrow, and what request he had to make. He instantly "prayed to the God of heaven," doubtless to strengthen him, and then made his petition to the king, for no less a boon, than to allow him to

rebuild the walls of the sacred city. His prayer preceded his petition. It was that prayer which gave him courage to present that petition, and which probably induced the sovereign to grant it. What a double encouragement is here given to the courtier, both to pray to God, and to speak truth to a king!

Though the plea of the man of business, for his own particular exemption, can by no means be granted, yet it is the sense he entertains of the value of his professional duties which deceives him. It leads him to believe, that there can be no evil in substituting business for devotion. He is conscious that he is industrious, and he knows that industry is a great moral quality. He is rightly persuaded, that the man of pleasure has no such plea to produce. He, therefore, imposes on himself, with the belief that there *can* be no harm in substituting a moral for a religious exercise; for he has learned to think highly of morality, while he assigns to religion only an inferior degree in his scale of duties.

He usually goes to church once on the Sunday; but it does not at all infringe on his religious system to examine his accounts, to give a great dinner, or to begin a journey on that day.

Now it is a serious truth, that there is no man to whom prayer is more imperatively a duty, or more obviously a necessity, than the man of business; whether in the higher or the middle classes of society. There is no man who more stands in need of quieting his anxieties, regulating his tem-

pers, cooling his spirits by a devout application for the blessing of God; none to whom it is more necessary to implore the Divine protection for the duties or preservation from the dangers of the scene in which he is about to engage; none to whom it is more important to solicit direction in the difficulties which the day may produce; none on whom it is more incumbent to solicit support against the temptations which may be about to assail him; none to whom the petition for an enlightened conscience, an upright intention, a sound probity, and an undeviating sincerity, is of more importance.

What is so likely as prayer to enable him to stand prepared to meet the accidental fluctuations in his affairs, to receive without inebriation a sudden flow of prosperous fortune, or to sustain any adverse circumstance with resignation?

Even persons in more retired situations, even those who have made considerable advances in religion, cannot but acknowledge how much the ordinary and necessary cares of daily life, especially how much any unexpected accession to them, are likely to cause absence and distraction in their devotions: — how much then ought they, whose whole life is business, to be on their guard against these dangers, to double their vigilance against them, and to implore direction under them.

Were the Christian militant accustomed never to engage in the moral battle of daily life, without putting on this panoply, the shafts of temptation would strike with a feeble and erring blow; they

would not so deeply pierce the guarded heart. And were fervent, humble, daily prayer once conscientiously adopted, its effects would reach beyond the week-day engagements. It would gradually extend its benign influence to the postponing of settling accounts, the festive dinner, and the not absolutely necessary journey, to one of those six days in which we are enjoined to labour. It would lead him to the habit of doing "no manner of work" on that day, in which the doing of it was prohibited by the great Lawgiver in his own person. We have more than once alluded to the diversities of character, occasional events, difference in the state of mind, as well as of circumstances, which may not only render the prayer which is suitable to one man unsuitable to another, but unsuitable to the same man under every alteration of circumstances.

But among the numerous topics for prayer, there is one which, being of universal interest, ought not to be omitted. For by whatever dissimilarity of character, capacity, profession, station, or temper, the condition of man, and, of course, the nature of prayer, is diversified; there is one grand point of union, one circumstance, one condition, in which they must all meet; one state of which every man is equally certain; one event which happeneth to all, — "It is appointed unto every man once to die." The rugged road of sorrow, the flowery path of pleasure, as well as

"The paths of glory, lead but to the grave."

In praying, therefore, against the fear of death, we do not pray against a contingent, but a certain evil; we pray to be delivered from the overwhelming dread of that house which is appointed for all living; we are put in mind that all who are born must die!

"The end of all things is at hand." To what purpose does the apostle convert this awful proclamation? Does he use it to encourage gloomy tempers, to invite to unprofitable melancholy? No: he uses the solemn admonition to stir us up to moral goodness — therefore, "be sober," — he does more, he uses it to excite us to religious vigilance, — "and watch unto prayer."

Some men, and they are not the best men, talk boldly of death, especially while they suppose it to be at a distance; but this boastful heroism is a very equivocal symptom of their being in a proper state to meet it. Others of a less confident, but not more serious cast of mind, take pains to keep it as far as possible from their thoughts, lest the indulging such gloomy reflections should make them uneasy, and embitter their present enjoyments. They banish it, indeed, from their thoughts, as they do other unpleasant subjects; but it is no proof that we do not fear a thing, because we manage to keep it out of sight; on the contrary, the effort betrays the very fear which it denies.

There is an inconsistency in the character of man, so preposterous, that we should not believe it, if we did not feel as well as see it. We continue eagerly to catch at the things which are always

sliding from us, and which no grasp of ours can retain, whilst we forget the things that are not only hastening to meet us, but which will remain with us, not through time only, but eternity. The more we grasp at the temporal, the more the eternal slips from us.

Others are afraid to think of death, for the same reason that they are afraid to make their will, lest it should bring it nearer: but we know that the thought will keep up the remembrance without accelerating the approach; familiarity with the idea is the best means of conquering the fear. It is not pusillanimity, but prudence, so to fear death as to fear to meet it in an unprepared state of mind; and that fear will always be safe and salutary, which leads to the preparation.

Prayer against the fear of death, by keeping up in us a constant remembrance of our mortality, will help to wean us from a too intimate attachment to the things we are so soon to quit. By this habitual preparation to meet our Judge, we shall be brought to pray more earnestly for an interest in the great Intercessor; and to strive more effectually against every offence which may aggravate the awfulness of that meeting. — Above all, such prayer will more emphatically remind us that it was sin which brought death into the world, which introduced that originial principle and first act of sin, from which all our natural evil and practical offences are derived.

But let us not be accustomed to think of death as a detached and separate object, as the mere in-

sulated circumstance of its closing our eyes for ever on all we have been accustomed to cherish; let us not think of it only as a consignment to the narrow chambers of the tomb, but let us ever connect with the idea of death the consoling assurance that, to the real Christian, its sting is drawn out; this will fill the heart with boundless love and endless gratitude to Him who has extracted it. This thought of death, though it will keep up in the mind the anticipation of that night, which, as to this world, shall know no morning, will also keep up the glorious prospect of that eternal day which shall know no night.

Fervent prayer that Divine grace may prepare us for death will, if cordially adopted, answer many great moral purposes. It will remind every individual of every class that "the time is short;" — that "there is no repentance in the grave."

To the *man of opulence*, who heapeth up riches and cannot tell who shall gather them, prayer will be a constant memento: it will remind him that he walketh in a vain shadow, and disquieteth himself in vain; it will remind him of laying up treasures where thieves cannot enter, nor rust corrode.

The habit of praying against the fear of death would check the pride of youthful *beauty*, by reminding her how soon it must say to the worm, Thou art my father, and to corruption, Thou art my mother and my sister.

The *man of genius*, he who thought that of making many books there would be no end; who in his zeal to write, had neglected to pray; who

had thought little of any immortality but that which was to be conferred by the applause of dying creatures like himself; who, in the vanity of possessing talents, had forgotten that he must one day account for the application of them: if happily he should be brought to see the evil of his own heart, to feel the wants of his own soul, how intense will be his repentance, that he had loved the praise of men more than the praise of God! how fervently will he pray that his mercies may not aggravate the account of his sins; that his talents may not become the instrument of his punishment! How earnestly will he supplicate for pardon, how devoutly will he "give glory to God before his feet stumble on the dark mountains!"

The *man of business*, to whom we have already adverted, who thought his schemes so deeply laid, his speculations so prudently planned, that nothing could frustrate them; who calculated that the future was as much in his power as the present, forgot that death, that grand subverter of projects, might interpose his *veto*. This man, who could not find time to pray, must find time to die: — he may at length find — happy if he ever find it, — that he cannot meet his end with a peaceful heart, and a resigned spirit, without the preparation of prayer for support in that awful period, "when his purposes shall be broken off and all his thoughts perish."

The *man of pleasure*, alas! what shall we say for *him?* He is sunk to the lowest step of degradation in the moral scale; he has not even human

supports; he has robbed himself even of the ordinary consolations resorted to by ordinary men. He has no stay on which to lay hold, no twig at which to catch, no pretence by which to flatter himself into a false peace; no recollection of past usefulness; he has neither served his country nor benefited society — what shall we say for him? If he pray not for himself we must pray for him — with God all things are possible.

The *statesman*, indefatigable in the public service, distinguished for integrity, but neglecting the offices of Christianity; whose lofty character power had not warped, nor cupidity debased, but whose religious principles, though they had never been renounced, had not been kept in exercise; — a spirit of rare disinterestedness; a moralist of unblenched honour, but who pleaded that duty had left him little time for devotion! Should Divine grace incline him at last to seek God, should he begin to pray to be prepared for death and judgment, he will deeply regret with the contrite cardinal, not that he served his king faithfully, but that his highest services had not been devoted to their highest object. In this frame of mind, that ambition which was satisfied with what earth could give, or kings reward, will appear no longer glorious in his eyes. True and just to his sovereign, devoted to his country, faithful to all but his Savious and himself, he now laments that he had neglected to seek a better country, neglected to serve the King Eternal, the blessed and only Potentate; neglected to obtain an interest in a king-

dom which shall not be moved. He feels that mere patriotism, grand as is its object, and important as is its end, will not afford support to a soul sinking at the approach of the inevitable hour, awed at the view of final judgment.

The *hero*, who, in the hot engagement, surrounded with the "pride, pomp, and circumstance of war," bravely defied death, forgot all that was personal, and only remembered — nobly remembered — his country and his immediate duty; — animated with the glory that was to be acquired by his arm, and almost ready to exclaim with the Roman patriot,

> " ——————— What pity
> That we can die but once to serve our country ! "

Yet this hero, if he had never made a conscience of prayer, may he not hereafter find, that the most successful instrumentality is a distinct thing in itself, and will be different in its results from personal piety? May he not find that though he saved others, himself he cannot save?

If, however, in after-life, in the cool shade of honourable retirement, he be brought, through the grace of God, to habituate himself to earnest prayer, he will deeply regret that he ever entered the field of battle without imploring the favour of the God of battles; that he had ever returned alive from slaughtered squadrons without adoring the Author of his providential preservation. If his penitence be sincere, his prayer will be effectual. It will fortify him under the more depressing pros-

pect of that death which is soon to be encountered in the solitude of his darkened chamber, without witnesses, without glory, without the cheering band, without the spirit-stirring drum, without the tumultuous acclamation; with no objects to distract his attention; no conflicting concerns to divide his thoughts; no human arm, either of others or his own, on which to depend. This timely reflection, this late, though never *too* late, prayer, may still prepare him for a peaceful dying bed; may lead him to lean on a stronger arm than his own, or that of an army; may conduct him to a victory over his last enemy, and thus dispose him to meet death in a safer state than when he despised it in the field; may bring him to acknowledge, that while he continued to live without subjection to the Captain of his salvation, though he had fought bravely, he had not yet fought the good fight.

THE CONSOLATIONS OF PRAYER. — ITS PERPETUAL OBLIGATION.

In addition to what has already been observed, as to convenient seasons for prayer, we cannot but remark, that many Christians have been enabled to convert their trials into blessings, by gradually bringing themselves to devote the hours of wakeful and even painful nights to devout meditation and prayer. By doing at first some violence to their inclinations, they have afterwards found in it both profit and pleasure. The night has been made to them a season of heart-searching thought and spiritual consolation. Solitude and stillness completely shut out the world, its business, its cares, its impertinences. The mind is sobered, the passions are stilled; it seems to the watchful Christian as if there were in the universe only God and his own soul. It is an inexpressible consolation to him to feel that the one Being in the universe, who never slumbereth nor sleepeth, is the very Being to whom he has free access, even in the most unseasonable hours. The faculties of the mind may not, perhaps, be in their highest exercise; but the affections of the heart, from the exclusion of distracting objects, more readily ascend to their noblest object. Night and darkness are no parasites: conscience is more easily alarmed. It puts on fewer disguises. We appear to ourselves more what we

really are. This detection is salutary. The glare which the cheerful daylight, business, pleasure, and company, had shed over all objects, is withdrawn. Schemes which, in the day, had appeared plausible, now present objections. What had then appeared safe, now, at least, seems to require deliberation. This silent season of self-examination is a keen detector of any latent evil, which, like the fly in the box of perfume, may corrupt much that is pure.

When this communion with God can be maintained, it supplies deficiencies of devotion to those who have little leisure during the day; and by thus rescuing these otherwise lost hours, it snatches time from oblivion, at once adds to the length of life, and weans from the love of it.

If the wearied and restless body be tempted to exclaim, "Would God it were morning!" the very term suggests the most consoling of all images. The quickened mind shoots forward beyond this vale of tears, beyond the dark valley of the shadow of death; it stretches onward to the joyful morning of the resurrection; it anticipates that blessed state where there is no more weeping and no more night; no weeping, for God's own hand shall wipe away the tears; no night, for the Lamb himself shall be the light.

If disqualifying pain, or distressing languor, prevent the utterance of supplication, patience is itself a prayer, and a prayer which will not fail to be heard. We have a striking instance of an answer to silent prayer in the case of Moses. In a situa-

tion of extreme distress, when he had not uttered a word, "the Lord said unto him, I have heard thy crying."

The tender mercy of our compassionate Father will make sense, and find meaning, in a prayer which is almost unintelligible to the languid sufferer who offers it. God wants not to be informed, he wants only to be remembered, to be loved, to be sought.

If, however, in the conduct of this nightly watching, and this nightly prayer, your own stock of thought or expression is absolutely deficient, prophets and apostles will not only afford you the most encouraging examples, but most profitable assistance. More especially the royal treasury of King David lies open to you; and whatever are your wants, there your resources are inexhaustible.

What joyful appeals does the psalmist make to Him to whom the darkness and the light are both alike! "Have I not remembered Thee in my bed, and thought upon Thee when I was waking?" — "In the night," he again exclaims, "I commune with my own heart, and search out my spirit." And of this holy practice was he so little weary, that he resolves to persevere in it: — "As long as I live will I magnify Thee in this manner." Similar to this is the apostrophe of the evangelical prophet, — "With my soul have I desired Thee in the night."

The Psalms of David exhibit the finest specimen of experimental and devotional religion in

the world. They are attended with this singular advantage and this unspeakable comfort, that in them God speaks to us and we speak to Him. This delightful interlocution between the King of saints and the penitent sinner; this interchange of character, this mixture of prayer and promise, of help implored and grace bestowed, of weakness pleaded and strength imparted, of favour shown and gratitude returned, of prostration on one part and encouragement on the other, of abounding sorrow, and overflowing mercy; this beautiful variety of affecting intercourse between sinful dust and infinite goodness, lifts the abased penitent into the closest and most elevating communion with his Saviour and his God.

Yet, inestimable as are the Psalms of David, in every point of view, and especially for the purpose here recommended, as a refuge for the suffering body, the wakeful mind, the praying spirit, and the oppressed heart, — that very sanctity, and depth of devotional feeling, which is their life-blood, may lead to a dangerous misapplication in the mouth of the irreligious. Holy expressions in prayer, and ebullitions of grateful praise, are more easily committed to the memory than impressed upon the heart. And is there not some danger, that not only the mere formalist but even the immoral man may apply to himself sentiments, declarations, assurances, and comforts, which can only belong to the real Christian? For instance; the arrogant man, as if, like the dervise in the Persian fable, he had shot his soul into the

character he assumes, repeats with complete self-application, "Lord, I am not high-minded;" the trifler says, "I hate vain thoughts;" the irreligious, "Lord, how I love thy law." He who seldom prays at all, confidently repeats, "All the day long I am occupied in thy statutes." The covetous, in the words of Paul or David, with as much self-complacency deprecates avarice, as if the anathema against it had ever opened either his heart or his purse.

On the other hand, as the hardest substances, by continual attrition, are at length penetrated, it is the pleasing task of charity to hope, that the habitual repetition of such feelings, sentiments, and principles, may sink into the hard heart, may lead its possessor to look into himself, to compare what he feels with what he reads, and by discovering the discrepancy between his life and his prayers, may open his eyes on his own danger, till, by the grace of God, the holy vehicle of his hypocrisy may be made that of his conversion.

Perhaps you are a doubting, weak, and trembling penitent; not, indeed, doubting of the mercies of God, but of your own interest in them. This feeling may arise from a deep and humbling sense of your own sins and infirmities, rather than from any criminal unbelief. Here comes in to your relief a whole host of gracious promises, peculiarly adapted to your case. The tender images of "the smoking flax," and "the bruised reed," the promised acceptance of "the contrite spirit and

the broken heart." But beyond all praise is the consoling assurance of our great High Priest, that "he is touched with the feeling of our infirmities." Touched with them, not only when he was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," but now when he is even "ascended to the glory which he had with his Father before the world began."

How soothing is this expression of the Divine compassion! It is not barely the hearing or the seeing, it is the *feeling* of our infirmities. He was in all points tempted like as we are. This is the most exquisite touch of sympathy; he not only suffered but was tempted; here indeed the resemblance has its limitation: for he was without sin. He knew the condition of "being tempted," but not that of yielding to it. It is this feeling of being tempted, which gives him such an intimate concern in the feeble, fearful Christian. He sends the angel of his presence, and saves them. What a striking confirmation of the blessed truth, that in all our afflictions he is afflicted, is the awful interrogation, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou," — not my church, but "*me?*"

It is a further encouragement to the dejected spirit that the Almighty was not contented to show his willinguess to pardon by single declarations, however strong and full. He has heaped up words, he has crowded images, he has accumulated expressions, he has exhausted language, by all the variety of synonyms which express love, mercy, pardon, and acceptance. They are gra-

ciously crowded together, that the trembling mourner who was not sufficiently assured by one, might be encouraged by another. And it is the consummation of the Divine goodness, that this message is not sent by his ambassador, but that the King of kings, the blessed and only Potentate, condescends Himself to pronounce this royal proclamation, — "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, trangression, and sin!" Forgiving, indeed, but in consonance with his just demand of repentance and reformation, "who will by no means clear the guilty."

The ardent and affectionate apostle of the Gentiles, within a very few verses, has also represented the Almighty under every character that is endearing and consoling. He denominates him "the God of patience and of comfort," "the God of hope and of peace:" titles which are peculiarly addressed to all the exigencies of man, and graciously expressive of God's will and power to supply them. There is an appropriation of the terms to the state of the fallen children of mortality, calculated to take away all fear, and to fill the vacant room with love, and peace, and gratitude unspeakable.

Refuse not, then, to take comfort from the promises of God, when perhaps you are easily satisfied with the assurance of pardon from a frail and sinful creature like yourself whom you had offended. Why is God the only being who is not believed?

who is not trusted? O Thou that hearest prayer, why unto thee will not all flesh come?

But though God's pardoning grace knows no bounds, his sanctifying grace is given by measure, is given as we use what we have already received. God seems to reserve in his own hands a provision for our humility, and thus keeps prayer in full exercise. The one is progressive in its operation, the other is full and free, bestowed not for any righteousness in the receiver, but for that full and perfect oblation once made for sin. But is it not a most fallacious trust to expect that our sins will be blotted out without that habitual repentance annexed to the promise? It is vain to offer the bribe of burnt-offerings, the thousands of rams, or the rivers of oil. God desires not to be paid for our pardon, nor profited by our offerings. He never sells his favours. The riches of the universe, which are, indeed, already his, could not procure the pardon of a single sinner, but he prescribes the duty, when he promises the pardon. "Repent, that your sins may be blotted out."

It would therefore supply ample matter or habitual prayer, had we only the sins of our nature to lament; but when to these we add our practical offences, oh, how great is the sum of them! Yet though they are more than we can express, they are not greater than God can forgive; not more than the blood which was shed for them can wash out.

But he to whom the duty of prayer is unknown, and by whom the privilege of prayer is unfelt, or

he by whom it is neglected, or he who uses it for form and not from feeling, may probably say, Will this work, wearisome even if necessary, never know an end? Will there be no period when God will dispense with its regular exercise? Will there never be such an attainment of the end proposed, as that we may be allowed to discontinue the means?

To these interrogatories there is but one answer, an answer which shall be also made, by an appeal to the enquirer himself.

If there is any day in which we are quite certain that we shall meet with no trial from Providence, no temptation from the world, any day in which we shall be sure to have no wrong tempers excited in ourselves, no call to bear with those of others, no misfortune to encounter, and no need of Divine assistance to endure it, on that morning we may safely omit prayer.

If there is any evening in which we have received no protection from God, and experienced no mercy at his hands; if we have not lost a single opportunity of doing or receiving good, if we are quite certain that we have not once spoken unadvisedly with our lips, nor entertained one vain or idle thought in our heart, on that night we may safely omit praise to God, and the confession of our own sinfulness; on that night we may safely omit humiliation and thanksgiving. To repeat the converse would be superfluous.

When we can conscientiously say, that religion has given a tone to our conduct, a law to our

actions, a rule to our thoughts, a bridle to our tongue, a restraint to every wrong passion, a check to every evil temper, then some will say, We may safely be dismissed from the drudgery of prayer, it will then have answered all the end which you so tiresomely recommended. So far from it, we really figure to ourselves, that if we could hope to hear of a being brought to such perfection of discipline, it would unquestionably be found that this would be the very being who would continue most perseveringly in the practice of that devotion, which had so materially contributed to bring his heart and mind into so desirable a state, who would most tremble to discontinue prayer, who would be most appalled at the thought of the condition into which such discontinuance would be likely to reduce him. Whatever others do, he will continue for ever to "sing praises unto Thee, O Thou most Highest; he will continue to tell of Thy loving kindness early in the morning, and of Thy truth in the night season."

It is true that while he considered religion as something nominal and ceremonial, rather than as a principle of spirit and of life, he felt nothing encouraging, nothing refreshing, nothing delightful in prayer. But since he began to feel it as the means of procuring the most substantial blessings to his heart, since he began to experience something of the realisation of the promises to his soul, in the performance of this exercise, he finds there is no employment so satisfactory; none that his mind can so little do without; none that so effec-

tually raises him above the world; none that so opens his eyes to its empty shadows; none which can make him look with so much indifference on its lying vanities; none that can so powerfully defend him against the assaults of temptation, and the allurements of pleasure; none that can so sustain him under labour, so carry him through difficulties; none that can so quicken him in the practice of every virtue, and animate him in the discharge of every duty.

But if prayer be so exhilarating to the soul, what shall be said of praise? Praise is the only employment, we had almost said it is the only duty, in which self finds no part. In praise we go out of ourselves, and think only of Him to whom we offer it. It is the most purely disinterested of all services. It is gratitude without solicitation, acknowledgment without petition. Prayer is the overflowing expression of our wants, praise of our affections. Prayer is the language of the destitute, praise of the redeemed, sinner. If the angelic spirits offer their praises exempt from our mixture of infirmity or alloy, yet we have a motive for gratitude, unknown even to the angels. They are unfallen beings; they cannot say as we can, "Worthy the Lamb, for he was slain for us." Prayer is the child of faith; praise, of love. Prayer is prospective; praise takes in, in its wide range, enjoyment of present, remembrance of past, and anticipation of future, blessings. Prayer points the only way to heaven; praise is already there.

ON INTERCESSORY PRAYER.

THE social affections were given us, not only for the kindliest but the noblest purposes. The charities of father, son, and brother, were bestowed, not only to make life pleasant, but to make it useful; not only that we might contribute to the present comfort, but to the eternal benefit of each other.

These heaven-implanted affections are never brought into exercise more properly, nor with more lively feelings, than in intercessory prayer. Our friends may have wants which we cannot remove, desires which we cannot gratify, afflictions which we cannot relieve, but it is always in our power to bring them before God; to pray for them whenever we pray for ourselves. This, as it is a most pleasant and easy, so it is an indispensable obligation. It is a duty which brings the social affections into their highest exercise, and which may be reciprocally paid and received.

The same Scriptures which expressly enjoin that supplication, prayers, intercession, and giving of thanks be made for all men, furnish also numerous examples of the efficacy of intercessory prayer. We need not dwell on the instance of the rain obtained by the prayers of Elijah, or the earlier availing intercessions of Moses, with other public deliverances effected in the same manner.

Though the perseverance of Abraham's prayer did not prevent the extermination of the polluted city, yet doubtless the blessing he solicited for it returned into his own bosom; and the successive promises made by the Almighty Judge to the successively reduced number of the righteous, for whose sake the petition for preservation was offered, affords a proof of the Divine approbation, and a striking encouragement to persist in the duty of intercessory prayer. The promise of God was not withdrawn. The prayer was conditional, and could the petitioner have made up his very lowest complement, the city had been saved. The interceding heart in any event is sure to gain something for itself.

Prayer is such an enlarger of the affections, such an opener of the heart, that we cannot but wonder how any who live in the practice of it should be penurious in their alms; or if they do give, should do it "grudgingly, or of necessity." Surely if our prayer be cordial, we shall be more ready to assist as well as to love those for whom we are in the habit of making supplication to God. It is impossible to pray sincerely for the well-being of others, without being desirous of contributing to it. We can hardly conceive a more complete species of self-deception than that practised by an avaricious professor of religion, one who goes on mechanically to pray for the poor, whilst his prayer has neither opened his heart nor his purse. He may value himself on this, as on other instances of his ingenuity, in having found out so

cheap a way of doing good, and go on contentedly, till he hears those tremendous words of exclusion, "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me."

There is a generosity in religion. The same principle which disposes a Christian to contribute to the temporal interests of those he loves, inclines him to breathe his earnest supplication for their spiritual benefit. Not only does prayer for others promote natural affection, not only does it soften the heart of him who intercedes, but it is hoped that they for whom the intercession is made may reap the benefit.

But our intercessions must dwell neither in generalities for the public, nor in limitations to the wants of our particular friends. The Christian is the friend of every description of the children of mortality. In the fulness of our compassion for the miseries of mankind, we pour out our hearts in prayer for the poor and destitute, and we do well. But there is another and a large class who are still more the objects of our pity, and consequently should be of our prayers. While we pray for those who have no portion in this world, do we not sometimes forget to pray for those who have their whole portion in it? We pray for the praying servants of God, but, perhaps, we neglect to pray for those who never pray for themselves. These are the persons who stand most in need of the mercy of the Almighty, and of our Christian importunity in their favour.

Is it not affecting, that even into our devotions

we are disposed to carry the regard we too highly indulge of the good things of this life, by earnestly imploring mercy upon those who want them; and by forgetting to offer our supplications in favour of those who are blinded by the too full enjoyment of them? If the one duty be done, should the other be left undone?

Happily we live in an age presenting numerous instances, where neither high station nor great riches impede piety, or obstruct devotion. Yet it is to be feared, that the general tendency of rank, and especially of riches, is to withdraw the heart from spiritual exercises, more than the hand from pecuniary bounty.

Let us then fervently include among the objects of our supplication that very pitiable and very necessitous class among the rich and great, if such a class there be, who live without any sensible feeling of the presence of God as acknowledged in prayer: — for those persons who never entertain a doubt of their own deserts, even if they do not deny Him who is the giver of the boundless blessings which lead them to forget Him. Strange! that the very overflowing cup which ought to ensure gratitude should induce forgetfulness! Strange! that prayer to God should be neglected in proportion to the magnitude of His bounties!

May the writer be permitted to enrich the penury of her own meagre composition with a beautiful extract from one whose unequalled rhetoric was always warmed by a deep sensibility and occasionally tinctured with religious feeling —

the eloquent and almost prophetic author of Reflections on the Revolution in France: —

"The English people are satisfied, that to the great, the consolations of religion are as necessary as its instructions. They, too, are among the unhappy. They feel personal pain and domestic sorrow. In these they have no privilege, but are subject to pay their full contingent to the contributions levied on mortality. They want this sovereign balm under their gnawing cares and anxieties, which being less conversant about the limited wants of animal life, range without limit, and are diversified by infinite combinations in the wild and unbounded regions of imagination. Some charitable dole is wanting to these our often very unhappy brethren, to fill the gloomy void that reigns in minds which have nothing on earth to hope or fear; something to relieve in the killing languor and over-laboured lassitude of those who have nothing to do; something to excite an appetite to existence in the palled satiety which attends on all pleasures which may be bought, where nature is not left to her own process, where even desire is anticipated, and, therefore, fruition defeated by meditated schemes and contrivances of delight; and no interval, no obstacle, is interposed between the wish and the accomplishment."

O you great ones of the earth, whom riches ensnare and prosperity betrays, be largely liberal, even from self-interest. Not, indeed, expecting to make the liberality you bestow a remuneration for the devotions you withhold. Scatter your super-

fluities, and more than your superfluities, to the destitute, if not to vindicate Providence, yet to benefit yourselves. Not, indeed, to revive the old pious fraud of depending for salvation on the prayers of others; yet still you may hope to be repaid, with usurious interest, from the pious poor, by the very tender charity of their prayers for you. Their supplications may possibly be so heard, that you may, at length, be brought to the indispensable necessity, and the bounden duty, of praying for yourselves.

As to the commanded duty of praying for our enemies, the most powerful example bequeathed to us in Scripture, next to that of his Divine Master on the cross, is that of St. Stephen. Even *after* the expiring martyr had ejaculated, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit," he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Let every instance of Roman greatness of mind, let every story of Grecian magnanimity, be ransacked, and produce, who can, such another example. Theirs is tumour, this is grandeur; theirs is heroism, this is Christianity; *they* died for their country, Jesus for his enemies; *they* implored the gods for themselves, Stephen for his murderers.

O, thou Divine Repairer of our sinful nature, Thou alone canst render a duty, so repugnant to the unrenewed heart, easy, pleasant, delightful!

THE PRAYING CHRISTIAN IN THE WORLD. — THE PROMISE OF REST TO THE CHRISTIAN.

As the keeping up a due sense of religion, both in faith and practice, so materially depends on the habit of fervent and heart-felt devotion, may we be permitted, in this place, to insist on the probable effects which would follow the devout and conscientious exercise of prayer, rather than on prayer itself?

As soon as religion is really become the earnest desire of our hearts, it will inevitably become the great business of our lives; the one is the only satisfactory evidence of the other: consequently the religion of the heart and life will promote that prayer by which both have been promoted.

They, therefore, little advance the true interests of mankind, who, under the powerful plea of what great things God has done for us in our redemption by His Son, neglect to encourage our active services in His cause. Hear the words of inspiration, "Be not slothful" — "run the race" — "fight the good fight" — "strive to enter in" — "give diligence" — "work out your own salvation" — "God is not unmindful to forget your labour of love" — "but when you have done all, say, Ye are unprofitable servants, ye have done that which was your duty to do."

But if, after we have done all, we are unprofitable servants, what shall we be if we have done nothing? Is it not obvious that the Holy Spirit, who dictated these exhortations, clearly meant that a sound faith in the word of God was meant to produce holy exertion in His cause? The activity in doing good of the Son of God was not exceeded by his devotion, and both gloriously illustrated his doctrines, and confirmed his divinity. Until then, we make our religion a part of our common life, until we bring Christianity, as an illustrious genius is said to have brought philosophy, from its retreat to live in the world, and dwell among men; until we have brought it from the closet to the active scene, from the church to the world, whether that world be the court, the senate, the exchange, the public office, the private counting-house, the courts of justice, the professional departments, or the domestic drawing-room, it will not have fully accomplished what it was sent on earth to do.

We do not mean the introduction of its language, but of its spirit: the former is frequently as incompatible with public as it is unsuitable to private business; but the latter is of universal application. We mean that the temper and dispositions, which it is the object of prayer to communicate, should be kept alive in society, and brought into action in its affairs. That the integrity, the veracity, the justice, the purity, the liberality, the watchfulness over ourselves, the candour towards others, all exercised in the fear of the Lord, and strengthened by the word of God and prayer,

should be brought from the retirement of devotion to the regulation of the conduct.

Though we have observed above, that it is rather the spirit than the language of religion that should be carried into business, yet we cannot forbear regretting that we seem to decline much from the sober usages of our ancestors. Formerly testamentary instruments were never made the mere conveyance of worldly possessions. They were also made the vehicle of pious sentiments, and always at least opened with a devout offering of the soul to Him who gave it. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine how a man *can* write the words *my last will* without a solemn reflection on that *last act* which must inevitably follow it, and in view of which act he is making it. May not this alteration in the practice be partly ascribed to the decline of habitual prayer? *

* I beg leave to strengthen my own sentiments on this head, by quoting a passage from an eminent and truly pious barrister, with an extract from the last will of one of the greatest men of our age.

"Of late years it has been the fashion (for there is a fashion even in the last act of a man's life) to omit these solemn preambles. I confess myself an approver of them, as believing it to be useful to the surviving relatives of the testator to draw their attention to the tremendous consequences of the separation of soul and body at a season of impressibility and reflection." By the following extract, from the will of the late Mr. Burke, it will be seen, that his sentiments on this point coincided with those above expressed: —

"First, according to the ancient good and laudable custom, of which my heart and understanding recognise the propriety,

But what fair opportunities have certain of the great officers of the law, especially in their *charges*, of giving to them a solemnity the most impressive, by adverting more frequently to the awful truths of Christianity! Even if such awakening appeals to the conscience should fail of their effect on the unhappy convicts to whom they are addressed, they may be of incalculable benefit to some of the numerous persons present. A counsel, a caution, a reproof, an exhortation, all on pure Christian principles, and thus coming from a profession to which it appears not immediately to belong, may, especially from not being expected, produce consequences the most salutary. The terribly affecting circumstances of the moment, the appalling scene so soon to follow, must give an unspeakable weight to the most touching admonition. He who is judging the condemned violator of Divine and human laws stands as a kind of representative of the future Judge of quick and dead, and will himself soon be judged by Him, a consideration which makes his responsibility peculiarly tremendous.*

I bequeath my soul to God, hoping for His mercy through the only merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. My body I desire, if I should die at any place very convenient for its transport thither (but not otherwise), to be buried at the church at Beaconsfield, near to the bodies of my dearest brother and my dearest son, in all humility praying, that, as we have lived in perfect unity together, we may together have part in the resurrection of the just." *Roberts on Wills*, vol. ii. p. 376.

* The late Lord Kenyon was neither afraid nor ashamed

But to return. — Though we must not, in accommodation to the prevailing prejudices and unnecessary zeal against abstinence and devotion, neglect the imperative duties of retirement, prayer, and meditation; yet, perhaps, as prayer makes so indispensable an article in the Christian life, some retired, contemplative persons may apprehend that it makes the whole; whereas prayer is only the operation which sets the machine going. It is the sharpest spur to virtuous action, but not the act itself. The only infallible incentive to a useful life, but not a substitute for that usefulness. Religion keeps her children in full employment. It finds them work for every day in the week, as well as on Sundays.

The praying Christian, on going into the world, feels that his social and religious duties are happily comprised in one brief sentence — "I will *think* upon thy commandments to DO them." What the Holy Spirit has so indissolubly joined, he does not separate.

He whose heart has been set in motion in the morning by prayer, who has had his spiritual pulse quickened by a serious perusal of the Holy Scriptures, will find his work growing upon him in

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to introduce both the doctrine and language of Christianity on these occasions; and we have lately seen other valuable instances of the adoption of this practice, which we trust is reviving. It was never more necessary than at the present moment, when audacious blasphemy is avowed in the highest courts of justice, in the face of the judge himself!

regular proportion to his willingness to do it. He is diligently exact in the immediate duties of the passing day. Though procrastination is treated by many as a light evil, he studiously avoids it, because he has felt its mischiefs; he is active even from the love of ease, for he knows that the duties which would have cost him little, if done on the day they were due, may, by the accumulation of many neglected days, cost him much. The fear of this rouses him to immediate exertion. If the case in question be doubtful, he deliberates, he enquires, he prays; if it be clear and pressing, what his hand finds to do, he does with all his might; and in the calls of distress he always acts on his favourite aphorism, that giving soon is giving twice.

Abroad how many duties meet him! He has on his hands the poor who want bread, the afflicted who want comfort, the distressed who want counsel, the ignorant who want teaching, the depressed who want soothing. At home he has his family to watch over. He has to give instruction to his children, and an example to his servants. But his more immediate, as well as more difficult, work is with himself, and he knows that this exercise, well performed, can alone enable him wisely to perform the rest. Here he finds work for every faculty of his understanding, every conquest over his will, for every affection of his heart. Here his spirit truly labours. He has to watch, as well as to pray, that his conscience be not darkened by prejudice; that his bad qualities do not assume the shape of

virtues, nor his good ones engender self-applause; that his best intentions do not mislead his judgment; that his candour do not degenerate into indifference, nor his strictness into bigotry; that his moderation do not freeze, nor his zeal burn. He has to control his impatience at the defeat of his most wisely conceived plans. He will find, that in his best services, there is something that is wrong, much that is wanting; and he feels, that whatever in them is right, is not his own, but the gift of God.

He finds that his obedience is incomplete, that his warmest affections are languid, perhaps his best intentions not realised, his best resolves not followed up. In this view, though he is abased in dust and ashes in looking up to God as the fountain of perfection, he is cheered in looking up to him also as the fountain of mercy in Christ Jesus. He prays, as well as strives, that the knowledge of his own faults may make him more humble, and his sense of the Divine mercies more grateful.

He will find that his faith, even though it does not want sincerity, will too frequently want energy. He has, therefore, to watch against cold and heartless prayer; though, perhaps, the humility arising from this consciousness is a benefit in another way. He feels it difficult to bring every "thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ," yet he goes on cheerily, willing to believe that what may be difficult is not impossible. He has to struggle against over-anxiety for temporal things. He has to preserve simplicity of intention, consistency, and

perseverance. He has, in short, to watch against a long list of sins, errors, and temptations, which he will find heavier in weight, and more in number, the more closely he looks into his catalogue.

The praying Christian in the world has, above all, to watch against the fear of man, as he may find it more easy to endure the cross than to despise the shame. Even if he have in a good degree conquered this temptation, he may still find a more dangerous enemy in the applause of the world than he found in its enmity. He has observed, that many amiable and even pious persons, who are got above the more vulgar allurements of the world, who have surmounted all the temptations of a mere sensual kind, who are no longer subdued by its softening luxuries, its seducing pleasures, its dazzling splendours, not its captivating amusements, have not yet quite escaped this danger. The keen desire of its good opinion, the anxiety for its applause, ensnares many who are got above any thing else which the world has to offer. This is, perhaps, the last lingering sin which cleaves even to those who have made a considerable progress in religion, the still unextinguished passion of a mind great enough to have subdued many other passions.

The danger of the Christian in the world is *from* the world. He is afraid of the sleek, smooth, insinuating, and not discreditable vices; he guards against self-complacency. If his affairs prosper, and his reputation stands high, he betakes himself to his only sure refuge, the throne of God; to his only sure remedy, humble prayer. He knows it

is more easy to perform a hundred right deeds, and to keep many virtues in exercise, than "to keep himself unspotted from the world," than to hold the things of the world with a loose hand. — Even his best actions, which may bring him most credit, have their dangers; they may make him fear that "while he has a name to live, he is dead."

Though much above feeling any joy in vulgar acclamation, he is not insensible to the praise of those who are praised by others; but though not indifferent to the good opinion of good men, the praise even of the best is not his object: he knows that to obtain it, is not the end for which he was sent into the world. His ambition is of a higher order, it has a loftier aim. The praise of man cannot satisfy a spirit which feels itself made for immortality.

He feels that if he had no sin but vanity, the consciousness of that alone would be sufficient to set him on his guard, to quicken him in prayer, to caution him in conduct. He does not fear vanity as he fears any other individual vice; as a single enemy, against which he is to be on the watch, but as that vice which, if indulged, would poison all his virtues. — Among the sins of the inner man, he knows that "this kind goeth not out but by prayer." — When he hears it said of any popular, and especially of any religious, character, "He is a good man, but he is vain," he says within himself, he is vain, and, therefore, I fear he is not a good man. How many right qualities does vanity

rob of their value, how many right actions of their reward!

Every suspicion of the first stirring of vanity in himself sends him with deeper prostration before his Maker. Lord, what is man! shall the praise of a fellow-creature, whose breath is in his nostrils, whose ashes must soon be mingled with my own, which may even before my own be consigned to kindred dust, shall *his* praise be of sufficient potency to endanger the humility of a being, who is not only looking forward to the applause of those glorious spirits which surround the throne of God, but to the approbation of God himself?

When those with whom he occasionally mixes see the praying Christian calm and cheerful in the world, they little suspect the frequent struggles, the secret conflicts, he has within. Others see his devout and conscientious life, but he alone knows the plague of his own heart. For this plague he seeks the only remedy: to prayer, that balm of hurt minds, he constantly repairs.

The praying Christian endeavours to make even what to some might seem casual expressions in Scripture matter of improvement. He is not contented to devote to the distressed his mere superfluities, he makes requisitions on his frugality to add to his contributions, and he learns this lesson from the highest model.

He observes that He who could feed thousands by a word of His mouth, yet took care not to let the miracle pass without grafting on it a moral maxim for general use, a religious duty for general

practice. He who could have multiplied to any extent the twelve baskets, as He had done the five loaves, condescended to say, "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost;" and that he might set an example of prayer in every possible form, He had previously *blessed* the simple but abundant meal, presenting, in this single instance, a union of three great qualities — generosity, economy, and devotion.

The practical Christian observes with grateful admiration how Scripture has, as it were, let down to the plainest apprehension the habitual duty of constantly looking to God, by a familiar allusion taken from domestic life. — The fidelity, the diligent attention, the watchful observance of "the eyes of a servant looking to the hand of his master, and the eyes of a maiden to the hand of her mistress," is a simple illustration of the Christian's duty, equally intelligible to him who serves, and obligatory on him who is served.

To a worldly man, his own sin appears less than it is; to a good man, greater; not that he sees through a false medium, or aggravates the truth, or forgets the apostle's direction, to think soberly; but while the nominal Christian weighs his offences in the scales of the world, the praying Christian brings his to the balance of the sanctuary. The former judges of sin only as he sees it in others; and the worst men in the rank above the vulgar do not always appear so bad as they are. In his own heart, he sees little, because with that heart he is not acquainted. Whereas his own bosom is the

very place where the good man looks for sin; and his perceptions of what is wrong are so delicate, that he sees it in its first seed; in short, the one thinks himself worse than others, because he knows himself well; the other thinks himself better, because he knows himself not at all.

When we consider the conflicts and the trials of the conscientious, watchful, praying Christian, we shall estimate aright the value of the consoling promise of that eternal rest from his labours, which supports him under them. And though *rest* is one of the lowest descriptions of the promised bliss of heaven, yet it holds out a cheering prospect of relief and satisfaction to a feeling being, who is conscious of the fallen condition of his mortal nature in all its weakness and imperfection. *Rest*, therefore, is of itself a promise sufficiently inviting to make him desire to depart and to be with Christ, even independently of his higher hope. The joy unspeakable, the crown of glory, and all those other splendid images of the blessedness of heaven, exalt and delight his mind. But it is, though with a higher, yet with a more indefinite, delight. He adores, without fully comprehending the mighty blessing. But the promise of rest is more intelligible to the heavy-laden Christian; he better understands it, because it is so exactly applicable to his present wants and feelings:—*this* is not our rest. It offers the relief longed for by a weary, frail, and feverish being. He who best knew what man wanted, promised to His disciples *peace and rest*, and His Divine Spirit has represented the

state of heaven under this image more frequently than under any other, as being in more direct contrast to his present state — a state of care, anxiety, and trouble, and a state of sin, the cause of all his other troubles. Perhaps this less elevated view of heaven may occur more rarely to persons of high-wrought feelings in religion, yet to the Christian of a contrary character, it is a never-failing consolation, a home-felt solace, the object of his fervent prayer. What a support to be persuaded that "the work of righteousness is peace, and the effect of righteousness is quietness and assurance for ever!"

THE LORD'S PRAYER, A MODEL BOTH FOR OUR DEVOTION AND OUR PRACTICE. — IT TEACHES THE DUTY OF PROMOTING SCHEMES TO ADVANCE THE GLORY OF GOD.

It is not customary for kings to draw up petitions for their subjects to present to themselves; much less do earthly monarchs consider the act of petitioning worthy of reward, nor do they number the petitions so much among the services done them, as among the burdens imposed on them. Whereas it is a singular benefit to our fallen race that the King of kings both dictates our petitions, and has promised to recompense us for making them.

In the Lord's Prayer may be found the seminal principle of all the petitions of a Christian, both for spiritual and temporal things; and, however, in the fulness of his heart he will necessarily depart from his model in his choice of expressions; into whatever laminæ he may expand the pure gold of which it is composed; yet he will still find the general principle of his own more enlarged application to God substantially contained in this brief but finished compendium.

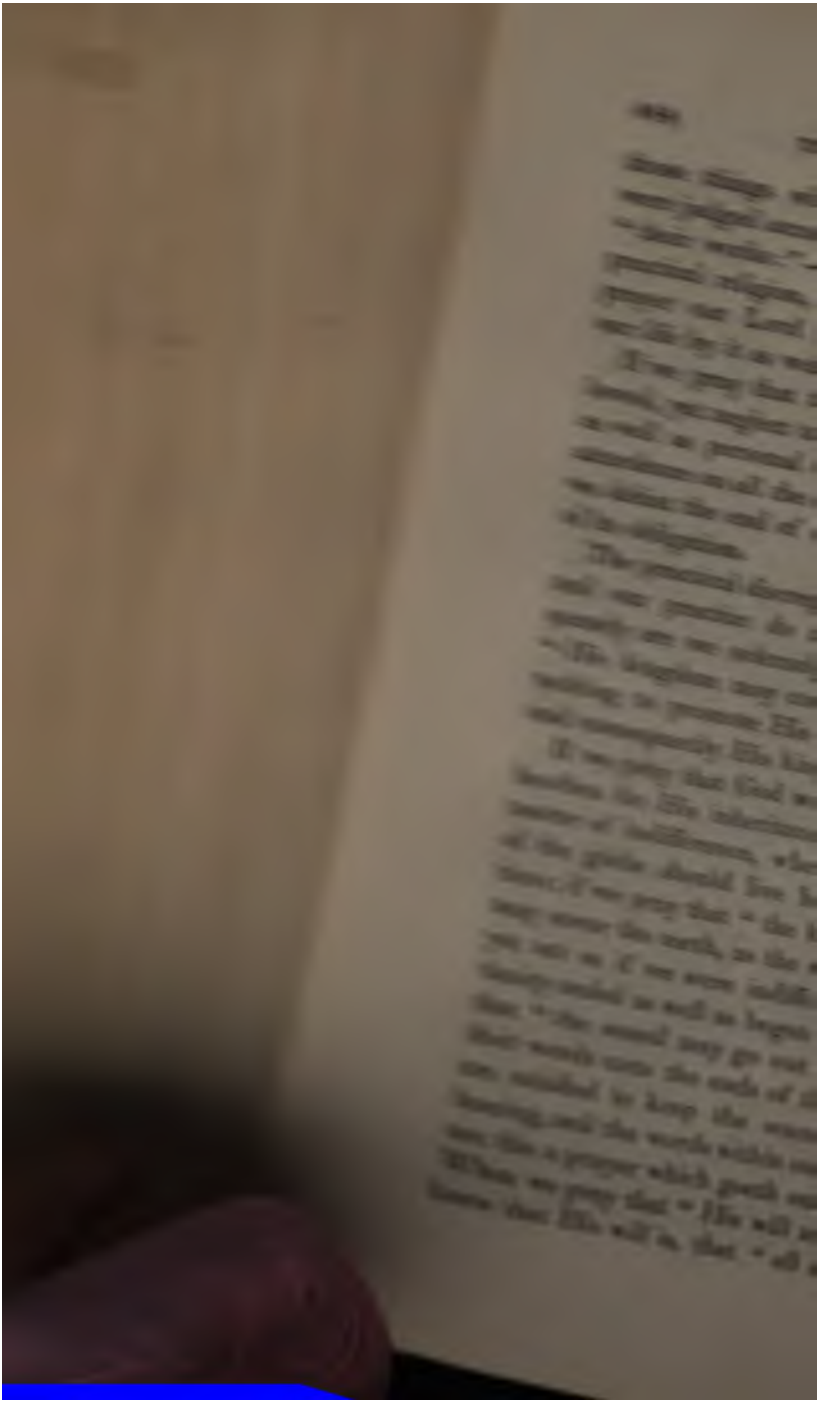
Is it not a striking proof of the Divine condescension, that knowing our propensity to err, our blessed Lord should Himself have dictated our petitions, partly, perhaps, as a corrective of existing superstitions, but certainly to leave behind him

a *regulator* by which all future ages should *set* their devotions; and we might, perhaps, establish it as a safe rule for prayer in general, that any petition which cannot in some shape be accommodated to the spirit of some part of the Lord's Prayer may not be right to be adopted, Here temporal things are kept in their due subordination; they are asked for in great moderation, as an acknowledgment of our dependence on the Giver. The request for the Divine intercession we must of course offer for ourselves, as the Intercessor had not yet assumed his mediatorial office.

There is in this prayer a concatenation of the several clauses, what in human composition the critics call concealed method. The petitions rise out of each other. Every part also is, as it were, fenced round, the whole meeting in a circle; for the desire that God's name may be hallowed, His will be done, and His kingdom come, is referred to, and confirmed by, the ascription at the close. If the kingdom, the power, and the glory, are His, then His ability to do and to give are declared to be infinite.

But, as we have already observed, if we do not make our prayer the ground of our practice, if we do not pray as we believe, and act as we pray, we must not wonder if our petitions are not heard, and consequently not answered.

In the tremendous scene in the Apocalyptic vision, where the dead, small and great, stand before God and the books were opened; and another book was opened; the dead were judged out of



that not one should perish." When, therefore, we assist in sending the Gospel to the dark and distant corners of the earth, then, and not till then, may we consistently desire of God in our prayers, that "His saving health may be known to all nations."

For we must vindicate the veracity of our prayer by our exertions, and extend its efficiency by our influence; if we contribute not to the accomplishment of the object for which we pray, what is this but mocking Omniscience, not by unmeaning, but unmeant petitions? If we do nothing, we are inconsistent; but if we do worse than nothing, if we oppose, and by our opposition hinder the good which we do not think proper to support, may we not possibly bring on ourselves the appalling charge of being "found fighting against God."

It is, indeed, an easier and a cheaper way to quiet the conscience by that common anodyne, "that the heathen are very well as they are, that the morals of the Hindoos are not inferior to those of Christians." With what sort of Christians these asserters of the rival innocence of idolaters associate, we will not pretend to determine.

But, allowing that we do not always send abroad the very best samples of Christianity, the very best representatives of its practical effects, allowing also that too many who remain at home, and who profess and call themselves Christians, are guilty of crimes which disgrace

human nature, yet Christianity renounces them; Christian governments inflict on them capital punishments. While among these poor idolaters all the social duties are trampled on, all the suggestions of natural conscience are stifled, rites the most obscene, sacrifices the most bloody, are offered; and these crimes are not only committed, but sanctioned, but enjoined; they do not violate religion, they make a part of it. Surely, then, politically connected with them as we are, and yet contentedly to leave them in their degraded state of morals, without any attempt for their improvement, do we not by this neglect virtually pronounce, and awfully anticipate, their dreadful sentence, "Let him that is unjust be unjust still, and he that is filthy let him be filthy still."

Again, it is an easier and a cheaper way to throw the weight off our own shoulders by the cool remark, that "these things belong not to us; human efforts are superfluous; God must bring them about by a miracle." — God, it is true, introduced Christianity by miracles, but He established it by means. Miracles, indeed, are His prerogative, but man is His instrument. Had He not sent His Gospel and His ministers, it is probable that the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Bythinia, and all proconsular Asia, had never heard of Christianity to this day, which is, indeed, still the case of too many parts of that region.

But is it not equally the effect of Divine grace, I had almost said, is it not equally a miracle,

when, in the hottest season of the most unrelenting warfare, in the most calamitous period of unusual scarcity, when Britain had the whole civilised world in arms against her, so that she could emphatically say, "There is none that fighteth for us but only Thou, O God," — when it might seem business enough for any but Christians to take care of themselves, — even then Britain raised the banner of the cross, not in the most unprofitable crusade for the most fruitless object, but that she might carry the knowledge of Him who suffered on it, to the ends of the habitable globe, — not to redeem His sepulchre from infidels, but to communicate to them the tidings of His resurrection, and of redemption through His blood? Is it not the effect of grace, and still more nearly approaching to a miracle, when in a period immediately subsequent, while their fields were yet red with slaughter, and their rivers ran blood, their cities plundered, and their kingdoms desolated, God disposed the hearts of hostile sovereigns, ruling over opposing nations, and the tenacious professors of different religions, yet, as if actuated by one universal feeling, simultaneously to rise up in one common cause for the accomplishment of this mighty object — when the first use they made of the termination of war was to disseminate the Gospel of peace; the first tribute they paid to the glory of God was to publish abroad that grand instrument of good will to men! Let us not then indulge groundless imaginations, as if miracles were wrought to justify indolence; as if man were to be

note-book of observation, and triumphantly produced as unanswerable objections to the whole plan. "But," says the profound prelate above named, in his very able defence of missions, preached before the venerable Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts *, "many well-disposed persons want much to be admonished what a dangerous thing it is to discountenance what is good, because it is not better, by raising objections to some under parts of it."

The truth is, *they* are neither enthusiasts nor superstitious, who believe that well-concerted and prudently-conducted societies for the promotion of this great object, acting with a deep sense of human imperfection, and in dependence upon the favour of God, will, in due time, with His blessing, without which nothing is strong, nothing is holy, accomplish the great end of bringing all the kingdoms of the world to become the kingdoms of the Redeemer. But *he* is the superstitious, he is the enthusiast, who indulges unfounded expectations, who looks for the fulfilment of declarations which have never been made, who depends upon miracles which have never been announced, who looks for consequences without their predisposing causes, who believes that the unassisted heathen, sunk in intellectual and spiritual darkness, shall call on Him of whom they have not heard, or that they shall hear without a preacher, or that the preacher will be found without being sent.

* Preached at their anniversary meeting, February 16th, 1738-9.

We might just as reasonably expect to see the beautiful imagery of Oriental metaphor, as displayed in the highly figurative language of the prophets, actually realised. We might as reasonably expect that the rose of Sharon shall literally blossom in the wilderness of Arabia, or the cedars of Lebanon spring up in the sandy valleys of Africa; that the thirsty desert should produce spontaneous springs of water; that the tame and savage animals should live together in friendly compact; that the material hills shall really sink and the valleys rise of themselves; — we might as rationally hope to see these lively illustrations of the fulfilment of the Divine promises literally verified, as to expect Christianity to make its own unassisted way into the distant and desolate corners of the earth. God has committed Christianity into the hands of Christians for universal diffusion.

Let it be observed, that it appears to be no real departure from the subject with which this chapter opened, that reference is not more frequently made in its progress to prayer. This seems to be the less necessary, as we are not reasoning with the irreligious man, but with the Christian, with him who professes to use the Lord's Prayer as the pattern of his own devotions; and from the premises of that prayer, these observations are not forced interpretations, but natural deductions.

The Almighty is consistent in all his operations. They always exhibit simplicity and economy. He never works a superfluous miracle. There is also analogy in his works. Christ wrought mi-

racles to relieve the bodily wants of the poor; he works miracles for them no longer, he turns them over to the rich. He wrought miracles on the first conversion of the heathen; He works miracles for them no longer, he now turns them over to Christians. He resigns to human agency, under his blessing, to provide for the spiritual wants of the ignorant, as well as for the temporal wants of the indigent. Christianity and riches are deposited in the hands of Christians, for the more general dispersion of both to the respectively destitute.

And when, if ever, through the unmerited mercy of God, that glorious and devoutly desired day shall arrive, which warms the heart even in the distant perspective of prophecy, when nation shall no more rise against nation, and they shall learn war no more; what is so likely to hasten that triumphant period, what is so likely to turn the sword into the pruning-hook, and to establish lasting peace throughout the world, as that spirit of love and concord which the universal diffusion of gospel light is calculated to impart? What is so likely to produce charity among all the children of the same common Father, as when subjects as well as sovereigns of every clime and colour, people and language, shall be brought to know God, from the greatest to the least?

Those admirable institutions, whose object it is to lead to this blessed consummation, have already enlarged the borders of Christian charity to an almost indefinite extent, by bringing into

contact, from every point of the compass, and from almost every city in the civilised world, Christians who had not so much as heard of each other's existence; it has already shown them that whatever difference of education and of government, whatever modifications of opinion had hitherto divided them, the great fundamental principles of love to God, of faith in his Son, and charity to the souls of men, are, at length, beginning to draw them into a nearer connection. These general principles of agreement are already bringing into one point of union persons whom difference of sentiment had kept asunder as widely as seas had separated, and are the only means, as far as human penetration can foresee, of drawing the cords of amity into still closer bonds.

Already, even in the early stage of this vast enterprise, may we not perceive that it has had a considerable share in promoting mutual good will, reciprocal kindness, and growing confidence, and this with foreigners, who, though they had subdued their enmity, might not so soon have conquered their jealousy? Has it not a powerful tendency to cure any remaining distrust, to confirm good faith, to promote confidence and attachment between nations, whose respect was not, perhaps, altogether untinctured with suspicion? May it not break down the wall of partition, which has so long kept us asunder? May it not bring those who were aforetime separated in heart as well as country, to unite in Christian brotherhood, till we become at length of one mind in doctrine,

as we already are in regard to this institution? May not the probable results of this Christian confederacy become a ratification between monarchs, firmer than any political compact, stronger than any diplomatic convention? For is it not an instrument of confederation of which the GREAT SEAL IS THE WORD OF GOD? Does it not embrace the two sublime objects of the song of the angelic hosts, by uniting "glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good will toward men?" For what means, we repeat, are so likely to bring churches, who have been hitherto kept in spiritual darkness, to a gradual and devoutly-desired reformation, as to disperse that darkness, as our being the honoured instruments of causing the full beams of Divine truth to shine more directly upon them?

To descend to the very minutest wheels of this mighty engine; — with whatever derision that which has been denominated popular charity may have been treated; its inferior divisions have this advantage, that they set in motion the young and the poor. To the young female of fortune, this subordinate part of the great whole furnishes a kind of novitiate to her future and more extended sphere of charity, for the details of which this sex has the most leisure. To the poor, like the admirable institution of the Savings' Bank, though for different purposes, it gives them a little and a safe lift in the scale of society. For will they not be less likely to follow in the turbulent train of the seditious demagogue, less disposed by his perni-

cious but persuasive outcry, to give their stated penny for the promotion of riot and the maintenance of rioters, when that penny has been pre-engaged for the circulation of that Volume, which forbids them to speak evil of dignities, which commands to avoid those who are given to change; to work, to be quiet, to mind their own business; which imperatively says, "I exhort that prayers and intercession be made for kings and all in authority;" and above all, will not the Bible be the surest antidote against the infection of the poison contained in that profusion of books, pamphlets, and placards, which, without such a specific, threatens both our moral and political destruction?

It is the nature of man to delight in party; he delights to belong to something, to hold to his fellow-creatures, though by the least and lowest link in the chain of society; let us, then, take advantage of this his natural weakness. For is it not better to attach him to something that is useful to himself and to others, that he may be less likely to be drawn into such schemes as are destructive of his temporal, as well as of his highest interests, and dangerous to the security of the state and of the country? To be connected, though by the lowest and slightest tie, with his superiors, is to the poor man at once an encouragement and a security. To belong to societies of which princes are the patrons, is at once a gratification and a guard; for will not this connection, remote as it may seem, confirm his abhorrence of those revo-

lutionary societies, whose aim is the overthrow of princes?

Let us not, then, grudge to the poor, who have so few pleasures, that pure, and to them that hitherto untasted, pleasure, that almost sacred feeling, how much more blessed it is to give than to receive. Let us not deny them the gratification of being humble contributors towards conveying that word of life to others, by which their own souls have been benefited; and to which they are indebted for the knowledge, that it is the duty of Christians to teach others what themselves have been gratuitously taught.

It is, however, most important to recommend that the petty contributions of the poor should never be extorted, nor even wrung from them by undue influence. It must be a willing offering, not pinched from their necessities, but cheerfully accepted as the thankful tribute of successful industry. With respect to such as are in distress, and especially in debt, it would be honest neither in themselves to give, nor in the collector to receive. A very few indiscretions of this kind have given too inviting a handle, which has been unfairly laid hold of to bring the plan itself into discredit.

To venture one more passage from the prelate already quoted — and who will accuse Bishop Butler of enthusiasm? — "If the Gospel had its proper influence in the Christian world in general, as this country is the centre of trade, and the seat of learning, a very few years, in all probability,

would settle Christianity in every country in the world *without miraculous assistance.*"

If we, then, in this highly favoured land, are blessed with the volume of Divine Revelation, let us impart it to others with the greater alacrity, from the humiliating recollection that it was no merit of our own which brought the news of eternal life to an island of barbarians and idolaters. Freely we have received, freely let us give.

The Sun of Righteousness, which first arose in the East, rejoicing as a giant to run his course, has travelled in the greatness of his strength, till, having made the circuit of the globe, having illuminated the western world, he is once again rising to shed the glories of his orient beams, where they first dawned.

> "So sinks the day-star in the Ocean bed,
> And yet again repairs his drooping head,
> And tricks his beams, and with new-spangled ore
> Flames in the forehead of his morning sky."

Let COMMERCE, then, wherever she spreads her sails, be assured, that whether she carries the wealth of Ormus or of Ind, barbaric pearl and gold from the East; or from the West, the mines of Potosi or Peru, the most precious merchandise with which her vessels can be freighted is that pearl of great price which the merchantman in the Gospel sold all that he had to purchase.

Let DISCOVERY, wherever she pushes her bold and perilous adventure, wherever she lights on an inhabited nook of land, even should she succeed

in exploring the secrets of the polar world; let her be assured that all the wonders for which gaping curiosity impatiently waits are not to be compared with the wonders contained in that Gospel, which it is to be hoped she will make part of her provision for the voyage. Let her be assured, that if she carries the Bible, she will, at her return, bring back no news of equal value with that she carries out; will bring back to her native home no tidings of equal joy to the glad tidings of the Gospel she has carried abroad.

Let CONQUEST, though her garments have been rolled in blood, make the vanquished the only reparation in her power, not merely like the conquering Cæsar and Alexander, by carrying civilisation in her train, but Christianity; by carrying them this charter of our own immortal hopes. If this mighty boon will not fully expiate the offences of the injurer, it will more than mitigate, it will even more than repay, the wrongs of the injured.

that goodness, which leadeth to repentance; of that purity, which, while it hates sin, invites the sinner to return.

All these attributes are His in the abstract. He is not only strong, but our strength; not only the giver of life, but life itself; He not only bestows, but *is* salvation; He not only teaches truth, but *is* truth; He not only shows the way to heaven, but *is* the the way; not only communicates light, but *is* light.

When we reflect that even His incommunicable attributes are employed in never-ceasing exercise for the common benefit and happiness of mankind, adoration is melted into gratitude. When we consider, that even His justice, that flaming sword which threatened our eternal exclusion from Paradise, the attribute at which the best may tremble, (for who is he that lives and sins not?) is turned in our favour by the great propitiation made for sin; that heart must be hard indeed, which is not softened into love. It is because we are so little accustomed to indulge these reflections, that our natural hardness acquires additional obduracy.

Whatever good there is even in the renewed man, is but a faint adumbration of the perfections of God. The best created things, light itself, lose all their brightness, when compared with the uncreated glory from which all they have is borrowed. The heavens are not pure in His sight; behold the moon, and it shineth not. He chargeth His angels with folly. The sublimest intellectual intelligences, and the brightest visible operations of His power, are swallowed up in the contempla-

tion of His underived original perfection. The foolishness of God is wiser than the wisdom of man, and the weakness of God is stronger than the strength of man.

Yet though the highest conceivable created excellence is thrown into utter darkness, in the comparison with this surpassing splendour, yet these remote resemblances serve to convey some idea, but, oh, how weak! some reminding, but, oh, how inadequate! some conception, but, oh, how faint! of the Divine perfections.

Hence in the highest qualities of the best Christian we have a hint, a rudiment which serves to recall to our mind the Divine excellence, of which they are an emanation. We use it, not as a means of overvaluing the creature but of raising our adoration of the infinite, inexhaustible, overflowing fountain of natural, intellectual, and spiritual good. Thus, though we cannot "search out the Almighty to perfection," yet these faint traces are constant intimations to us to imitate, in our low measure and degree, all the imitable attributes of Almighty Goodness. He would never have said, "Be ye holy as I am holy," if holiness had been absolutely unattainable. There must be an aim, however low, at this conformity to our Divine pattern.

The life which the Lord of glory condescended to lead on earth has introduced us to the nearest possible view of the Divine perfections, and exhibited a clearer prospect of the possibility of a closer imitation of them, than could have been conveyed to us by any other means. His actions

are not merely objects of human admiration. They all, with the exception of his miracles, imperatively demand to be imitated, as well as admired. His meekness under reproaches the most contumelious; His patience under sufferings the most exquisite; His combination of active beneficence with unremitting devotion, — for, after days spent in successive acts of charity, He continued all night in prayer to God; His union of constant self-denial with unwearied bounty; His enduring hunger, who could have relieved it by one of those miracles so often performed for the relief of others; His compassion for sinners joined with His hatred of sin; His supplication for His enemies, extenuating their guilt, by pleading their ignorance. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!"

If this religion be not practical, if this practice be not a pattern for ours, we know not what is. While we obey Him then in praying for our fellow-creatures, let us remember that we must imitate His Divine philanthropy in assisting them; while we rank ourselves among His admirers, by praising His excellences, let us remember we shall only be known to be His disciples when we love one another.

If good works then be indispensable, and if faith be their great influencing principle, both must be kept alive and kept in exercise by the aliment of prayer. Prayer is the chain of communication with God himself; the readiest way to be assimilated to His likeness, the best means of promoting our conformity to His will, of advancing

our love to Him and to each other. If we neglect prayer, we rob ourselves of the prescribed means of our serving him here, and of the fairest foretaste of that communion with Him, which will be our highest happiness hereafter.

The obedience of the heart which grows out of a sound faith, rooted good desires, well-weighed resolutions of fidelity, formed in a higher strength than our own; a belief in the sacred Scriptures so confirmed, as not to be shaken by any objections brought against them, by any difficulties to be found in them; the comparing faithfully all we have heard urged against religion, with all we have seen of its effects, and experienced of its benefits, — all this is the solid ground on which future attainments must hereafter be built, a ground on which to build prayer by the enquiring mind and the seeking heart.

And when our reason is become as strong on the side of Christianity as our belief — when our faith is as enlightened as it is implicit — when the growth of the one only confirms the dominion of the other, — this is such an obedience of the heart as will infallibly produce obedience in the life; an obedience which will be both the cause and the consequence of effectual prayer.

The renewing of the soul after the image of God is not otherwise to be obtained than by true spiritual heart-searching prayer. There may be a form of unfelt petitions, a ceremonious avowal of faith, a customary profession of repentance, a general acknowledgment of sin, uttered from the

lips to God; — but where is His image and superscription written upon the heart? Where is the transforming power of religion in the life? Where is the living transcript of the Divine original? Where is that holiness to which the vision of the Lord is specifically promised? Where is the light, and life, and grace of the Redeemer exhibited in the temper and conduct? Yet we are assured, that if we are Christians, there must be an aim at this conformity.

As for the genuine Christian, however weak in faith, and defective in obedience, yet he is still seeking, though with slow and faltering steps, the things which are above; he is still striving, though with unequal progress, for the prize of his high calling; — he is still looking, though with a dim and feeble eye, for glory, honour, and immortality; he is still waiting, though not with a trust so lively as to annihilate the distance, to see his eternal redemption drawing nigh. Though his aims will always be far greater than his attainments, yet he is not discouraged: his hope is above, his heart is above, his treasure is above; no wonder then that his prayers are directed, and a large portion of his wealth sent forward thither, where he himself hopes soon to be. It is but transmitting his riches of both kinds not only to his future but his eternal home.

Even if prayer were as worthless, with respect to present advantages, and religion as burdensome, as some suppose, it would be a sufficient vindication of both that they lead to eternal bliss. When, by

a distant journey, we have been long separated from our own beloved habitation, we do not call that the most desirable road back to it which abounds with the gaiest objects, but that which will bring us the most safely home. If, indeed, we can amuse ourselves with the scenery, without slackening our pace, or diverging from our path, it is well. It is no offence against the law of love, if we catch, in passing, such innocent and safe delights as His bounty has scattered in our path. And if our journey have so many refreshments showered down by the hand of Divine beneficence, what shall be the delights of our home!

If the heavens grow black with clouds, and storms arise, these only serve to quicken our pace, and make us avoid digression. If sickness or accident befall us, our heart is still cheered with the thought that we are nearer home; the future supports us under the present: a little further, say we — a little more fatigue, and we shall see the desire of our heart. If we are bent on security rather than amusement, the straightest and the safest way will determine our choice. Heaven is worth more sacrifices of pleasure and of profit than those to which a religious life may subject us; though, after all, it often calls for fewer and lighter than a worldly one imposes. But if it were as rough and thorny as those who have never tried it believe, it would be a sufficient apology for voluntarily encountering its hardships, that it is the only road to heaven.

When the prosperous fool says, "Soul, *take*

thine ease, thou hast much goods laid up for thee," — the prosperous Christian says, "Soul, *tremble* at thine ease — be on thy guard. Thou hast, indeed, much goods laid up for thee, but it is in a future world. Lose not a large inheritance for a paltry possession; forfeit not an unalienable reversion for a life-interest, — a life which this very night may be required of thee."

Perhaps even the worldly and thoughtless man, under an occasional fit of dejection, or an accidental disappointment, may be brought to say, "When I am in heaviness, I will think upon God." — Oh, think upon Him now, — now, when you are in prosperity; now, when your fortunes are flourishing; now, when your hill is so strong that you think it shall never be removed: think upon Him when the scene is the brightest, when the world courts, flatteries invite, and pleasures betray you; think on Him while you are able to think at all, while you possess the capacity of thinking. The time may come, when "He may turn His face from you, and you will be troubled." Think of God, when the alluring images of pleasure and of profit would seduce you from Him. Prosperity is the season of peculiar peril. "It is the bright day that brings forth the adder." Think of God when the tempting world says, "All this will I give thee." Trust not the insolvent world, it has cheated every creditor that ever trusted it. It will cheat you.

To those who are yet halting between two opinions, or rather between an opinion and an in-

clination; to those who approve the right, but pursue the wrong; those who are not without convictions, but which convictions pleasure stifles, or business over-rules; those who are balancing between the world and Him who made it, who resolve to reform, but make the resolution a substitute for the performance; — and, oh, how large, and in many points how respectable, a class this is! — to these, to the doubting, and the dilatory, we would take the liberty to speak plainly.

It is much to be feared, that secret, unconscious infidelity lies at the bottom of the little progress you make in your spiritual attainments. If the truth, certainty, and inconceivable importance of eternal things were once rooted and grounded in the heart, it would infallibly quicken both devotion and practice. We know, but we do not act upon the knowledge, that our great business in this world is to determine our choice for eternity. This is not a bye-work, which may be deferred to any time at the hazard of its not being done at all; it is the imperious business of the present hour, the next may not be granted us. It is not an affair to be kept in reserve, an affair to be postponed till other affairs are settled; for how many souls has this dilatory delusion ruined!

The resolution you may make at this moment, and the practical effect of this resolution, may determine your destiny for ever. The decision, if delayed, may never be made; the call, now given, may never be repeated. Think what you put to hazard by delay. There is not an hour in our

lives on which eternal life, or eternal death, may not depend. Shall we then, for a single moment, make it a matter of debate what our everlasting condition shall be? If it were a decision between two temporal concerns which you were called upon to make, deliberation might be wisdom, because there might be degrees of comparison between their value, and, consequently, a doubt as to the predominance of the object, and the prudence of your choice. But the inequalities of created things are levelled when brought into comparison with the things of eternity: the difference of more or less, richer or poorer, prosperity or privation, no longer exists; the distinction is swallowed up when contemplated in the view of endless happiness or endless misery. Here, then, if you hesitate, you have already taken your part: irresolution is decision; deliberation is destruction: you have already resolved.

The hand which now holds the pen dares not denounce anathemas, but trembles as it transcribes the divinely inspired denunciation of the prophet Zephaniah. "The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, it hasteth greatly: it is the voice of the day of the Lord, when the mighty man shall cry bitterly. That day is a day of wrath; a day of trouble and distress; a day of wasteness and desolation; a day of darkness and gloominess; a day of clouds and thick darkness; a day of the trumpet and alarm!"

The awful ruins of imperial Rome, the still more defaced vestiges of learned Athens, present a

deeply touching spectacle of departed glory. Still more affecting is it to contemplate in the volume of history the destruction of Carthage, of Babylon, of Memphis, whose very ruins are no longer to be found! How affecting to meditate on ancient Troy, whose very site can no longer be determined! Yet here no wonder mixes with our solemn feelings. All these noble monuments of human grandeur were made of destructible materials; they could not, from their very nature, last for ever. But to a deeply reflecting mind, what is the ruin of temples, towers, palaces, and cities, what is the ruin of "the great globe itself," compared with the destruction of one soul meant for immortality — a soul furnished by its bountiful Creator with all the means for its instruction, sanctification, redemption, and eternal bliss? — And what presents the most mournful picture to us, and is in itself the most dreadful aggravation, is that its consciousness cannot be extinguished; the thought of what he might have been will magnify the misery of what he is — a reflection which will accompany and torment the inextinguishable memory through a miserable eternity.

Whether, in the instance of the rich man, who "in hell lift up his eyes, being in torment," we might dare believe that some remains of human tenderness for his relatives might survive in a ruined soul; or, whether his anguish was made more bitter, from the reflection, that he had been their corrupter, and therefore dreaded that their punishment might hereafter aggravate his own, we pre-

tend not to say. In any event, it offers a lesson pregnant with instruction. It admonishes every impenitent offender of the dreadful addition that may be made to his own misery, by that corrupt example which has ruined others. And it will be the consummation of his calamity that he can see nothing but justice in his condemnation. For it is worth observing, that the man in the parable brings no accusation against the equity of this sentence. Thus shall every condemned sinner "justify God in his saying, and clear him when he is judged."

But though the anguish of an undone futurity, and the specific nature of the punishment, are exhibited with awful clearness and explicit exactness in the Gospel, how wisely has the Holy Spirit, who dictated it, avoided all particulars of that heavenly happiness which we are yet assured will be without measure and without end; — whilst the Elysian groves of the Pagan, and the Paradise of the Mahometan, have been graphically represented, the former by their poets, the latter in their religious code. The one describes the inhabitants reposing in gloomy bowers in cheerless indolence; with the alternative of a restless activity exercised in contemptible pursuits, and renewing on inferior objects the busy feats in which they had delighted here below! The heroes who during life had slaughtered men make war on beasts! The mighty warriors, who had made the earth to tremble, condescend in heaven to tame horses! The departed Mussulman receives *his* celestial

rewards in scenes of revelry and banquets of voluptuousness! What gratifications for an immaterial, immortal spirit!

The whole scheme of future happiness exhibited in these two systems is a preposterous provision for the perishable part of man, to the entire exclusion of the immortal principle: both schemes stand in direct opposition to the laws of Infinite Wisdom, and the express word of Scripture. Both intimate as if the body were the part of our nature which is to exist after death, while the soul is the portion which is to be extinguished. Of a spiritual heaven, neither the obsolete mythology nor the existing Koran affords the slightest intimation.

The Scripture views of heaven are given rather to quicken faith than to gratify curiosity. There the appropriate promises to spiritual beings are purely spiritual. It is enough for believers to know that they shall be for ever with the Lord; and though it doth not yet appear what we shall be, yet we know that when he shall appear we shall be like Him. In the vision of the Supreme Good there must be supreme felicity. Our capacities of knowledge and happiness shall be commensurate with our duration. On earth, part of our enjoyment — a most fallacious part — consists in framing new objects for our wishes; in heaven there shall remain in us no such disquieting desires, for all which *can* be found we shall find in God. We shall not know our Redeemer by

the hearing of the ear, but we shall see him as he is; our knowledge, therefore, will be clear, because it will be intuitive.

It is a glorious part of the promised bliss, that the book of Prophecy shall be realised; the book of Providence displayed; every mysterious dispensation unfolded, not by conjecture, but by vision. In the grand general view of Revelation, minute description would be below our ideas; circumstantial details would be disparaging; they would debase what they pretended to exalt. We cannot conceive the blessings prepared for us, until he who has prepared reveal them.

If, indeed, the blessedness of the eternal world could be described, new faculties must be given us to comprehend it. If it could be conceived, its glories would be lowered, and our admiring wonder diminished. The wealth that can be counted, has bounds; the blessings that can be calculated, have limits. We now rejoice in the expectation of happiness inconceivable. To have conveyed it to our full apprehension, our conceptions of it must then be taken from something with which we are already acquainted, and we should be sure to depreciate the value of things unseen, by a comparison with even the best of the things which are seen. In short, if the state of heaven were attempted to be let down to human intelligence, it would be far inferior to the glorious but indistinct glimpses which we now catch from the oracles of God, of joy unspeakable and full of glory. What

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